



ATLANTA FALCONS WEEKLY PRESS RELEASE

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PRESEASON WEEK 2

ATLANTA FALCONS (1-0)

VS

New England Patriots (1-0)

8:00 p.m. (EST), Thursday, August 19, 2010, Georgia Dome



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FALCONS WELCOME PATRIOTS TO THE GEORGIA DOME



The Falcons continue preseason play when they host the New England Patriots on Thursday August 19, at the Georgia Dome in a nationally televised game. Thursday night's contest marks the 11th preseason meeting between the two clubs. The Falcons have a 5-5 all-time preseason record against the Patriots, winning the last two matchups and three of the last four.



Atlanta kicked off 2010 with a 20-10 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs last Friday. The Falcons held the Chiefs in check with a solid performance on both sides of the ball. Atlanta's defense set the offense up inside the Chiefs' 20-yard line with a pair of interceptions, leading to 10 points and giving the Falcons the 20-10 victory. The Patriots also began the 2010 preseason in winning fashion last Thursday, when they defeated the defending Super Bowl Champion New Orleans Saints, 27-24, in New England.

Falcons GM Thomas Dimitroff served as a National Scout and later the Director of College Scouting for the Patriots from 2002-07 before taking his current role in Atlanta. While in New England Dimitroff began developing the philosophy that has helped turn the Falcons franchise around.

Many of the Falcons young players continued to blossom in 2009, as second year LB Curtis Lofton totaled a team high 160 total tackles (118 solo), two forced fumbles and two passes defended. In a week three matchup against the Patriots last season, Lofton tallied a career high 19 stops, including 13 solo tackles.

Atlanta finished the 2009 season with a 9-7 record and back to back winning seasons for the first time in franchise history. The Falcons ended the season with three straight wins and a season sweep of NFC South rival Tampa Bay, while the Patriots finished with a 10-6 record and reclaimed the top spot in the AFC East before falling in the opening round of the playoffs.

BROADCAST INFORMATION

TELEVISION
Coverage Provided By FOX
Play-by-Play: Joe Buck
Color Analyst: Troy Aikman
Sideline: Pam Oliver

RADIO
Coverage Provided By
DAVE-FM (92.9)
Play-by-Play: Wes Durham
Color Analyst: Dave Archer
Sideline: Sam Crewnshaw

2009 NFC SOUTH STANDINGS

Team	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA	Div.	Conf.
New Orleans	13	3	0	.813	510	341	4-2	9-3
Atlanta	9	7	0	.563	363	325	3-3	6-6
Carolina	8	8	0	.500	315	308	4-2	8-4
Tampa Bay	3	13	0	.188	244	400	1-5	3-9

TAKE IT AWAY

In 2009, the Falcons posted a 5-1 record when totaling three or more takeaways, which ranked tied for fourth in the NFL. In the 2010 preseason opener, the Falcons continued that trend as the defense recorded three takeaways, leading to 10 points. DE Kroy Biermann forced a fumble while sacking Chiefs' QB Matt Cassel and CB Chevis Jackson and rookie S Shann Schillinger each recorded an interception.

3+ TO RECORD, 2009

Team	3+ Record
New Orleans	9-0
Green Bay	8-0
Philadelphia	7-0
Atlanta	5-1
Buffalo	5-1

Monday, August 16

- Practice 8:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m.
- Coach Smith available on the field following the morning practice.
- Players available on the field after both practices.

Tuesday, August 17

- Practice w/ New England 8:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m.
- Coach Smith available on the field following the morning practice.
- Players available on the field after both practices.

THIS WEEK'S MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Wednesday, August 18

- Practice 10:15 a.m.
- Coach Smith available on the field following the morning practice.
- Players available on the field after both practices.

Thursday, August 19

- Atlanta Falcons vs. New England Patriots
- 8:00 p.m. Georgia Dome

Friday, August 20

- No Practice

Saturday, August 21

- Practice 9:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m.
- Coach Smith available on the field following the morning practice.
- Players available on the field after both practices.

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THIS WEEK'S MATCHUP



2010 SCHEDULE

PRESEASON

Date	Opponent	Time	Result/Network
Aug. 13	KANSAS CITY	8 p.m.	W, 20-10
Aug. 19	NEW ENGLAND	8 p.m.	FOX (national)
Aug. 27	at Miami	7 p.m.	WXIA
Sept. 2	at Jacksonville	7:30 p.m.	WXIA

REGULAR SEASON

Date	Opponent	Time	Result/Network
Sept. 12	at Pittsburgh	1:00 p.m.	FOX
Sept. 19	ARIZONA	1:00 p.m.	FOX
Sept. 26	at New Orleans	1:00 p.m.	FOX
Oct. 3	SAN FRANCISCO	1:00 p.m.	FOX
Oct. 10	at Cleveland	1:00 p.m.	FOX
Oct. 17	at Philadelphia	1:00 p.m.	FOX
Oct. 24	CINCINNATI	1:00 p.m.	CBS
Oct. 31	BYE WEEK		
Nov. 7	TAMPA BAY	1:00 p.m.	FOX
Nov. 11	BALTIMORE	8:20 p.m.	NFL NETWORK
Nov. 21	at St. Louis	4:05 p.m.	FOX
Nov. 28	GREEN BAY	1:00 p.m.	FOX
Dec. 5	at Tampa Bay	1:00 p.m.	FOX*
Dec. 12	at Carolina	1:00 p.m.	FOX*
Dec. 19	at Seattle	4:00 p.m.	FOX*
Dec. 27	NEW ORLEANS	8:30 p.m.	ESPN*
Jan. 2	CAROLINA	1:00 p.m.	FOX*

Home games in bold caps; all kickoffs are Eastern.

* Denotes Flexible Scheduling

ALL-TIME RESULTS

All-time preseason results: Series tied, 5-5

All-time regular season results: Series tied, 6-6

All-time postseason results: No meetings

Falcons regular season home record vs. Patriots: 4-3

Falcons regular season road record vs. Patriots: 2-3

Falcons regular season record at Georgia Dome: 2-2

Current regular season streak: Patriots - three games

Last regular season meeting: 2009, Patriots 26 - Falcons 10 (NE)

PRESEASON

Year	Result	Location
1971	Atlanta 45-35	NE
1973	Atlanta 27-10	Atl
1976	New England 28-17	Atl
1977	New England 29-0	NE
1979	New England 37-14	Atl
1987	New England 14-13	FL
1988	Atlanta 34-30	NE
1989	New England 23-7	Atl
1990	Atlanta 45-14	NE
2006	Atlanta 26-23	Atl

REGULAR SEASON

Year	Result	Location
1972	Patriots 21-20	NE
1977	Patriots 16-10	Atl
1980	Falcons 37-21	NE
1983	Falcons 24-13	Atl
1986	Patriots 25-17	NE
1989	Falcons 16-15	Atl
1992	Falcons 34-0	Atl
1995	Falcons 30-17	Atl
1998	Falcons 41-10	NE
2001	Patriots 24-10	Atl
2005	Patriots 31-28	Atl
2009	Patriots 26-10	NE

GAMEDAY STORYLINE

Falcons General Manager Thomas Dimitroff was the Director of College Scouting for the New England Patriots from 2003-07. While in New England, Dimitroff helped in the evaluation and drafting of many of the Patriots franchise cornerstones. Working with Patriots Head Coach Bill Belichick and former VP of Player Personnel Scott Pioli, Dimitroff helped to construct the 2003 and 2004 Super Bowl Championship winning teams.

TALE OF THE TAPE

2009 Regular Season Statistics

Falcons (rank)		Patriots (rank)
22.7 (13)	Points Per Game	26.6 (6)
340.4 (16)	Total Offense Per Game	397.3 (3)
117.3 (15)	Net Rushing Yards Per Game	120.1 (12)
223.2 (14)	Net Passing Yards Per Game	277.3 (3)
29:47	Possession Average	32:55
20.3 (14t)	Opponent Points Per Game	17.8 (5)
348.9 (21)	Opponent Total Offense Per Game	320.2 (11)
106.8 (10t)	Opponent Net Rushing Yards Per Game	110.5 (13)
242.1 (28)	Opponent Net Passing Yards Per Game	209.7 (12)
+3 (11t)	Turnover Differential	+6 (8t)

2009 REGULAR SEASON LEADERS

Leading Passer:	Comp.	Att.	Yards	TDs	INTs	Rating
Matt Ryan, Atl	263	451	2,916	22	14	80.9
Tom Brady, NE	371	565	4,398	28	13	96.2
Leading Rusher:	Att.	Yards	Avg.	Long	TDs	
Michael Turner, Atl	178	871	4.9	58t	10	
Laurence Maroney, NE	194	757	3.9	45t	9	
Leading Receivers:	Rec.	Yards	Avg.	Long	TDs	
Roddy White, Atl	85	1,153	13.6	90t	11	
Wes Welker, NE	123	1,348	11.0	58	4	



Running Back Michael Turner powers into the end zone for a two-yard touchdown against the Patriots during a 26-10 loss in 2009.

QUOTING COACH SMITH

Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith on having a young but experienced team -

"I think a lot of it has to do with our third year players. They are very experienced third year players. Some of [those] guys like, QB Matt Ryan, OT Sam Baker, WR Harry Douglas and LB Curtis Lofton, they were starters from the very first game. We think of them as third year players, chronologically, but in terms of their experience I think they're way beyond their third year. The number of snaps these guys have participated in are a lot more than most third year players. I think that's why the expectations to continue their process of learning what we're trying to do, that the arrow's pointing up, that they're more experienced than their number of years chronologically."



THIS WEEK'S MATCHUP



MIKE SMITH

Coaching Years in NFL: 12th Year
Falcons Head Coach: 3rd Year
Regular Season: 20-12 (.625)
Postseason: 0-1 (.000)

In his first season as Head Coach of the Falcons, Mike Smith led Atlanta to one of the biggest turnarounds in NFL history (+7 wins from 2007) while finishing second in the NFC South Division and guiding the team to their first playoff appearance since 2004.

For his efforts, he earned NFL Coach of the Year honors from the *Associated Press* and *Sporting News*. Smith's 11 victories tied him for the best record for rookie head coaches in the NFL taking over a team that finished below .500 the previous season. Atlanta witnessed several improvements from the 2007 season, which included points per game average, rushing yards per game average, passing touchdown to interception ratio and sacks allowed. Atlanta also ranked first in the NFL in first quarter points scored and sixth in first quarter points allowed.

COACHING BACKGROUND

1982	San Diego State	Asst. Coach
1983-85	San Diego State	Linebackers
1986	Morehead State	Def. Line
1987	Tennessee Tech	Def. Line
1988-95	Tennessee Tech	ST. Coord.
1996-98	Tennessee Tech	Def. Coord.
1999-2001	Baltimore Ravens	Def. Line
2002	Baltimore Ravens	Linebackers
2003-07	Jacksonville Jaguars	Def. Coord.
2008-10	Atlanta Falcons	Head Coach



Bill Belichick

Coaching Years in NFL: 36th Year
Patriots Head Coach: 11th Year
Regular Season: 148-92 (.617)
Postseason: 15-5 (.750)

Currently in his 36th season as an NFL coach and his 11th as Patriots Head Coach. Belichick is the only head coach in League history to win three Super Bowl's in a four year span (2001, '03, and '04). In his 10 seasons as Patriots Head Coach, Belichick has

obtained four conference titles, six division crowns, and 14 playoff victories. Belichick is also the only NFL coach to lead his team to an undefeated regular season (2007). He also earned AP Coach of the Year honors that same year. Before joining the Patriots, Belichick spent five seasons as the Cleveland Browns head coach. He also worked with the New York Giants, Baltimore Colts, Detroit Lions, Denver Broncos and New York Jets.

COACHING BACKGROUND

1975	Baltimore Colts	Special Asst.
1976-77	Detroit Lions	Asst. ST/WRs/TEs
1978	Denver Broncos	Asst. ST/
		Asst. to Def. Coord.
1979-90	NY Giants	ST/LBs/Def. Coord./
		Secondary
1991-95	Cleveland Browns	Head Coach
1996	New England Patriots	Asst. HC/
		Secondary
1997-99	NY Jets	Asst. HC/Secondary
2000-10	New England Patriots	Head Coach

NOTABLE CONNECTIONS



Football Family: GM **Thomas Dimitroff** was a National Scout He also was the Director of College Scouting for the Patriots from 2003-2007. Dimitroff was with the Patriots when they won back-to-back Super Bowls in 2004 and 2005.

Coaches Corner: Falcons' Running Backs Coach **Gerald Brown** coached RB **Chris Taylor** when he was at Indiana from 2002-05. **Brown** also coached RB **BenJarvus Green-Ellis** at Indiana University from 2003-04. Offensive Line Coach **Paul Boudreau** held the same position in New England from 1997-98. Defensive Line Coach **Ray Hamilton** coached the Patriots defensive line from 1997-99 and played for the Patriots from 1973-81.

Swapping Sidelines: FB **Dan Klecko** won two Super Bowl titles while playing for the Patriots from 2003-2005. Newly acquired TE **Robbie Agnone** was on the Patriots' practice squad last season. Patriots' TE **Alge Crumpler** played for the Falcons from 2001-09.

College Teammates: WR **Harry Douglas** played at Louisville with Patriots OL **George Bussey** from 2004-08. C **Todd McClure** blocked for RB **Kevin Faulk** at LSU when he rushed for a school record 4,557 yards. QB **Matt Ryan** and Patriots DT **Ron Brace** played together at Boston College from 2004-07. DT **Corey Peters** and Patriots DT **Myron Pryor** played together at Kentucky. DB **Brian Williams** played with WR **Torry Holt** at North Carolina State from 1996-98. RB **Antone Smith** played with Patriots WR **Rod Owens** at Florida State for three seasons from 2006-08. DT **Vance Walker** and DT **Darryl Richard** played with LB **Gary Guyton** at Georgia Tech from 2005-08. WR **Brandyn Harvey** played with DB **Ross Ventrone** at Villanova. LB **Mike Peterson** and Patriots DE **Gerard Warren** were teammates at Florida in 1998. TE **Keith Zinger** and LB **Eric Alexander** were teammates at LSU in 2003. S **Matt Giordano** played with LB **Tully Banta-Cain** at California. WR **Kerry Meier** played with RB **Thomas Clayton** at Kansas. QB **John Parker Wilson** and **Mike Johnson** both played with DL **Brandon Deaderick** at Alabama. DT **Peria Jerry** played with Green-Ellis at Mississippi. LT **Sam Baker** played on the same USC team as LB **Thomas Williams** from 2004-07.

THE LAST TIME OUT



The Falcons opened the 2010 preseason with a 20-10 win over the Kansas City Chiefs at the Georgia Dome. Atlanta took a 3-0 lead when QB Matt Ryan led the first team offense on a 10 play, 55-yard drive to set up a K Matt Bryant 30-yard field goal. Kansas City would tie the game with a 20-yard field goal at the end of the first half. The Falcons defense set the tone for the second half when rookie S Shann Schillinger intercepted a pass and returned it to the Chiefs 14-yard line, setting up a two-yard touchdown run from RB Dimitri Nance. Atlanta's defense forced a three and out on the Chiefs next possession and QB John Parker Wilson then led the Falcons on a 19 play, 81-yard drive, setting up another Nance touchdown run. Atlanta would push its lead to 20-3 with a field goal early in the fourth quarter before Kansas City finally found the endzone in the closing seconds of the game.



The New England Patriots kicked off 2010 with a 27-24 win over the defending Super Bowl Champion New Orleans Saints. The Patriots jumped out to an early 10-0 lead in the first quarter and took a 17-7 lead into half time thanks to short touchdown runs from RB BenJarvus Green-Ellis and RB Laurence Maroney. Maroney would add a second touchdown early in the third quarter before the Saints rattled off three straight scores, including a 97-yard kickoff return for a touchdown, to tie the game at 24-24. New England took a 27-24 lead with just under a minute to play in the game and sealed the victory with a LB Eric Alexander interception on the Saints next offensive play.



THIS WEEK'S MATCHUP



PROBABLE STARTERS



OFFENSE

WR Michael Jenkins - In 2009, contributed with 50 receptions for 635 yards (12.7 avg.) and one TD, which ranked third on the team.

LT Sam Baker - Started in 14 games at left tackle and was part of an offensive line that did not allow a sack in 18 consecutive quarters.

LG Justin Blalock - In 16 starts, blocked for a Falcons rushing attack that registered 1,876 yards (sixth in the NFC).

C Todd McClure - In his 11th season with the Falcons, posted his 128th consecutive start, which tied the team record also held by Keith Brooking (2000-08).

RG Harvey Dahl - Started in 11 games before being placed on injured reserve.

RT Tyson Clabo - The starter at right tackle for 16 games in 2009. Part of an offensive line that assisted quarterback Matt Ryan in setting a career-high with 329 yards against the 49ers (Week 5).

TE Tony Gonzalez - Ranked second on the team in receiving yards with 867 on 83 receptions with six touchdowns. Topped 11,000 career receiving yards in Week 1 against the Miami Dolphins and set a new franchise record for receptions in a single-season by a tight end with 83.

WR Roddy White - Started all 16 games and led the team in receiving yards with 1,153 on 85 receptions (13.6 avg.). Also recorded 11 TDs, which set a new career-high. Became the second receiver in franchise history to record three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons. Tallied a franchise single-game record with 210 yards in Week 5 at San Francisco while contributing with a career-long 90-yard TD reception in that game.

QB Matt Ryan - In 14 games, completed 263 of 451 passes for 2,916 yards and 22 TDs for an 80.9 passer rating. Set a career-high with 329 yards against the 49ers in Week 5, while completing a 90-yard TD pass in the game (third longest in club history).

RB Michael Turner - Led the team in rushing with 178 carries for 871 yards and 10 touchdowns. Totaled four 100-plus yard games, which included his third-highest single-game rushing total with 166 yards against Washington (Week 9). Added a three-touchdown performance against the 49ers in Week 5.

FB Ovie Mughelli - Paved the way for running back Michael Turner to rush for 871 yards in 2009. Contributed with seven receptions for 51 yards.

PROBABLE STARTERS



DEFENSE

RE John Abraham - In 16 games, compiled 5.5 sacks and now has 89.5 quarterback takedowns in his career. Also contributed with 44 tackles, one forced fumble and one pass defended.

DT Jonathan Babineaux - Posted a single-game career-high with 2.5 sacks against the Redskins and logged a career-best 6.0 quarterback takedowns. Also contributed with a career-best 58 tackles (44 solo), two forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and two passes defended.

DT Peria Jerry - Selected as a first round (24th pick overall) draft choice by Atlanta in 2009 and competed in two games before his rookie season was cut short due to a knee injury.

LE Jamaal Anderson - Part of a defensive effort that allowed only 10 points against San Francisco in a Week 5 victory. Totaled 34 tackles, a half of a sack and two passes defended in 13 games.

OLB Stephen Nicholas - Started his first career NFL game against Miami in Week 1. Totaled 82 tackles in 16 games and recorded a career-high three sacks, one forced fumble, one fumble recovery and two passes defended.

MLB Curtis Lofton - In 16 starts at middle linebacker led the team with 160 tackles while adding two forced fumbles and two passes defended. Set a career-high with 19 tackles against New England.

OLB Mike Peterson - In his first season as a member of the Falcons, ranked second on the team with 140 tackles and added one interception, one sack, six passes defended and two forced fumbles. His turnovers have led to 16 Falcons points.

RCB Dunta Robinson - Signed as a free agent in 2010. In six NFL seasons, has totaled 374 tackles (300 solo tackles), 13 interceptions, four sacks, one fumble recovery and one touchdown.

LCB Chris Owens - Played in all 16 games, starting in the final six contests at left cornerback and totaled 34 tackles (24 solo), two interceptions and two passes defended.

SS Erik Coleman - Led the secondary in tackles with 139 stops which is a career-high. Also contributed with two forced fumbles and five passes defended.

FS Thomas DeCoud - Started all 16 games and recorded 113 tackles, seven passes defended, one fumble recovery, two forced fumbles, two sacks and three interceptions.

STARTING EVOLUTION



Below is a look at the evolution of the Falcons starters over the last four seasons. In 2009, Atlanta witnessed eight players start in their first career games, including defensive end Kroy Biermann, free safety Thomas DeCoud, fullback Verron Haynes, defensive tackle Peria Jerry, linebacker Stephen Nicholas, cornerback Christopher Owens, defensive tackle Vance Walker and tight end Keith Zinger. Underlined players are new starters, while bolded players are rookies.

STARTING LINE UP EVOLUTION 2007-2010

OFFENSE					DEFENSE				
	2007	2008	2009	2010		2007	2008	2009	2010
WR	<u>Roddy White</u>	Roddy White	Roddy White	Roddy White	LE	<u>Jamaal Anderson</u>	Jamaal Anderson	Jamaal Anderson	Jamaal Anderson
LT	<u>Quinn Ojinnaka</u>	Sam Baker	Sam Baker	Sam Baker	DT	<u>Montavious Stanley</u>	Jonathan Babineaux	Jonathan Babineaux	Jonathan Babineaux
LG	Justin Blalock	Justin Blalock	Justin Blalock	Justin Blalock	DT	<u>Jonathan Babineaux</u>	<u>Grady Jackson</u>	<u>Thomas Johnson</u>	Peria Jerry
C	Todd McClure	Todd McClure	Todd McClure	Todd McClure	RE	John Abraham	John Abraham	John Abraham	John Abraham
RG	Kynan Forney	<u>Harvey Dahl</u>	Harvey Dahl	Harvey Dahl	OLB	Michael Boley	Michael Boley	<u>Mike Peterson</u>	Mike Peterson
RT	Tyson Clabo	Tyson Clabo	Tyson Clabo	Tyson Clabo	MLB	Keith Brooking	Curtis Lofton	Curtis Lofton	Curtis Lofton
TE	Alge Crumpler	<u>Justin Peelle</u>	<u>Tony Gonzalez</u>	Tony Gonzalez	OLB	Demorrio Williams	Keith Brooking	<u>Stephen Nicholas</u>	Stephen Nicholas
WR	<u>Joe Horn</u>	<u>Michael Jenkins</u>	Michael Jenkins	Michael Jenkins	CB	DeAngelo Hall	<u>Domonique Foxworth</u>	Brent Grimes	Chris Owens
QB	<u>Chris Redman</u>	Matt Ryan	Matt Ryan	Matt Ryan	CB	Chris Houston	Chris Houston	Chris Houston	<u>Dunta Robinson</u>
RB	Warrick Dunn	<u>Michael Turner</u>	Michael Turner	Michael Turner	SS	Lawyer Milloy	Lawyer Malloy	Erik Coleman	Erik Coleman
FB	<u>Ovie Mughelli</u>	Ovie Mughelli	Ovie Mughelli	Ovie Mughelli	FS	Chris Crocker	<u>Erik Coleman</u>	Thomas DeCoud	Thomas DeCoud

GENERAL MANAGER THOMAS DIMITROFF

BUILDING THROUGH THE DRAFT



In two seasons since Thomas Dimitroff ascended to the General Manager's post in Atlanta, he has engineered key moves and drafted a solid nucleus of players to augment the Falcons roster. Dimitroff's philosophy is centered on the belief that the NFL Draft is a major building block to establish a team's foundation for the future. This strategy, combined with his targeting of veteran players to shore up various positions, has been the catalyst for the Falcons turnaround since 2008.

Thirteen of 22 projected starters in 2010 were originally drafted by the Falcons. Six of those projected starters were drafted by Dimitroff in 2008 or 2009, including current franchise cornerstones like quarterback Matt Ryan, left tackle Sam Baker, middle line-backer Curtis Lofton and safety Thomas DeCoud.

2010 PROJECTED STARTERS DRAFTED BY ATLANTA

OFFENSE			DEFENSE		
Pos.	Player	How Acq.	Pos.	Player	How Acq.
WR	Michael Jenkins	'04 Draft	DT	Jonathan Babineaux	'05 Draft
LT	Sam Baker	'08 Draft	DT	Peria Jerry	'09 Draft
LG	Justin Blalock	'07 Draft	LE	Jamaal Anderson	'07 Draft
C	Todd McClure	'99 Draft	OLB	Stephen Nicholas	'07 Draft
WR	Roddy White	'05 Draft	MLB	Curtis Lofton	'08 Draft
QB	Matt Ryan	'08 Draft	LCB	Chris Owens	'09 Draft
<i>Bold names drafted by Dimitroff</i>			S	Thomas DeCoud	'08 Draft

REVOLUTIONARY THINKING



Falcons GM Thomas Dimitroff spent six years working for the New England Patriots as a National Scout and later the Director of College Scouting. It was during his time in New England that Dimitroff cultivated his philosophy on how to build a team. While with Patriots, Dimitroff worked with Head

Coach Bill Belichick and then Vice President of Player Personnel, Scott Pioli to help the Patriots win two Super Bowl titles in 2003 and 2004 (XXXVIII & XXXIX), and post a 77-17 overall record. Many of the Patriots franchise cornerstones were scouted, evaluated and later drafted under Dimitroff. Some of those players include center Dan Koppen, guard Logan Mankins, safety Brandon Meriweather and nose tackle Vince Wilfork.

While working in New England, Dimitroff help draft six players that have combined for 10 Pro Bowl selections since 2002.

PRO BOWLERS

Player	PBs
Asante Samuel	3
Vince Wilfork	2
Logan Mankins	2
Dan Koppen	1
Stephen Gostkowski	1
Brandon Meriweather	1

ROSTER REBUILT



In two seasons as the Falcons General Manager, Thomas Dimitroff re-worked the roster to feature 15 new starters from the 2007 campaign. With the Draft being a key to his philosophy, it comes as no surprise that 16 of the 19 players Dimitroff has selected have seen game action and 10 have started games. In all, 18 rookies have been active on game day since 2008.

FALCONS ROSTER BUILT THROUGH THE DRAFT

2009		2007	
Player	Round	Player	Round
*DT Peria Jerry	1st	*DE Jamaal Anderson	1st
S William Moore	2nd	*G Justin Blalock	2nd
*CB Chris Owens	3rd	*LB Stephen Nicholas	4th
DE Lawrence Sidbury	4th	*DT Trey Lewis	6th
T Garrett Reynolds	5th	*RB Jason Snelling	7th
LB Spencer Adkins	6th	2006	
*DT Vance Walker	7th	*RB Jerious Norwood	3rd
2008		*G Quinn Ojinnaka	5th
*QB Matt Ryan	1st	2005	
*LT Sam Baker	1st	*WR Roddy White	1st
*LB Curtis Lofton	2nd	*DT Jonathan Babineaux	2nd
*CB Chevis Jackson	3rd	*DE Chauncey Davis	4th
WR Harry Douglas	3rd	2004	
*S Thomas DeCoud	3rd	*WR Michael Jenkins	1st
LB Robert James	5th	2003 - N/A	
*DE Kroy Biermann	5th	2002 - N/A	
*TE Keith Zinger	7th	2001 - N/A	
*Denotes player that has started at least one game		2000 - N/A	
		1999	
		*C Todd McClure	7th

DID YOU KNOW?

Dimitroff's late father, Tom, was a member of the inaugural Boston Patriots AFL team in 1960 and a long time scout for the Cleveland Browns where he worked with Patriots Head Coach Bill Belichick from 1991-95 when Belichick was the Browns head coach.

SENIORS RULE



The Falcons place a premium on players that have not only shown skills on the field but also have proven to be leaders both on and off of it. In Dimitroff's three drafts in Atlanta, the team has focused on drafting players that are seniors that have been consistent in their performance and improvement at the college level. Since 2008, 24 of the 26 players that the Falcons have selected on Draft day were college seniors, while 15 of those players were either named or voted team captain by their coaches or peers.

Winner's Circle:

The Falcons feature 13 players that have played in a collegiate national championship game, with 11 of those 13 players winning a national title at the collegiate level.

COLLEGE CAPTAINS

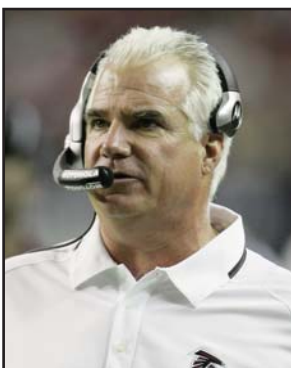
Player	Class
Matt Ryan	SR
Sam Baker	SR
Thomas DeCoud	SR
Thomas Brown*	SR
Peria Jerry	SR
William Moore	SR
Chris Owens	SR
Lawrence Sidbury	SR
William Middleton*	SR
Garrett Reynolds	SR
Sean Weatherspoon	SR
Corey Peters	SR
Mike Johnson	SR
Kerry Meier	SR
Schann Schillinger	SR
*not on the current roster	

HEAD COACH MIKE SMITH

HOLDING DOWN THE DOME



In his first year at the helm, Head Coach Mike Smith realized the importance of winning at home and did not dissappoint the team or Falcons fans alike. In 2008, Atlanta's 7-1 record at the Georgia Dome was the best home mark for a Falcons team since 2004. Smith improved this record in 2009 following a difficult schedule. With wins coming against Miami, Carolina, Chicago, Washington, Tampa Bay and Buffalo, he finished the 2009 campaign with a 6-2 mark at the Georgia Dome and in two seasons, has pieced together a 13-3 home record.



Smith's 2008 record of 7-1 was tied for the best home mark by a Falcons first year head coach (since Jim Mora accomplished the feat in 2004). With the wins coming in six of eight home games in 2009, Smith has recorded a career home record of 13-3 (.816) while his overall mark sits at 20-12 (.625). Below is a look at where Smith ranks among other Falcons head coaches in both categories.

<u>Coach</u>	<u>Seasons</u>	<u>Home Record (%)</u>	<u>Overall Record (%)</u>
Mike Smith	2008-09	13-3 (.816)	20-12 (.625)
Jerry Glanville	1990-93	20-12 (.625)	27-37 (.424)
Jim Mora	2004-06	14-10 (.583)	26-22 (.542)
June Jones	1994-96	14-10 (.583)	19-29 (.396)
Leeman Bennett	1977-82	25-18 (.581)	46-41 (.516)



FEELING RIGHT AT HOME



Head Coach Mike Smith ranks first among Falcons head coaches in team history with total wins accumulated at home in the first two seasons at the helm. Smith tops June Jones who claimed victory in 12 games from 1994-95. Below is a glance at Atlanta's top three head coaches in terms of home wins in their first two seasons.

MOST HOME WINS IN FIRST TWO SEASONS IN FALCONS HISTORY

<u>Coach</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Wins</u>
Mike Smith	2008-09	13
June Jones	1994-95	12
Leeman Bennett	1977-78	11
Jerry Glanville	1990-91	11
Dan Reeves	1997-98	11
Jim Mora	2004-05	11

PUTTING THE CLAMP ON



Following two seasons as Head Coach of the Falcons, Mike Smith has led a disciplined team to an 18-1 record in games where Atlanta holds the lead at halftime. In 2009, the Falcons were 7-0 when accomplishing the feat and on only one occasion did the Falcons lose a lead in the second half (Week 6 vs. Chicago, tied 14-14 in the fourth quarter). In 2008, Atlanta was 11-1 with leads at halftime and only four times were those advantages lost, resulting in the lone defeat at the hands of the Denver Broncos (Week 11). In 2009, the Falcons averaged a 12.6-point lead against opponents at halftime as the defense shutout the Miami Dolphins (Week 1) and Buffalo Bills (Week 16) after two quarters of play.

GATHERING WINS



For the first time in franchise history, the Falcons pieced together back to back winning seasons after finishing the 2009 campaign with a 9-7 record. Through two seasons as Atlanta's Head Coach, Mike Smith has totaled a 20-12 record which is tied for the fourth-most wins in the NFL over that time span.

NFL'S BEST RECORDS 2008-09

<u>Team</u>	<u>Record</u>
Indianapolis Colts	26-6
Minnesota Vikings	22-10
New England Patriots	21-11
New Orleans Saints	21-11
Pittsburgh Steelers	21-11
San Diego Chargers	21-11
Tennessee Titans	21-11
Atlanta Falcons	20-12
Five other teams tied	20-12

COACH SMITH'S RECORD WHEN...

(regular season totals only)

Overall Record:	20-12
vs. the NFC:	14-10
vs. the AFC:	6-2
vs. the NFC South Division:	6-6
The Falcons play at home:	13-3
The Falcons play on the road:	7-9
The Falcons play during the day (1 p.m. EST games):	16-9
The Falcons play during the afternoon (4 p.m. EST games):	3-2
The Falcons play a night game (8 p.m. EST games):	1-1
The Falcons play indoors:	14-6
The Falcons play outdoors:	6-6
The Falcons score first:	17-6
The Falcons lead at halftime:	18-1
The Falcons lead at the start of the fourth quarter:	18-1
The Falcons lead in time of possession:	12-5
The Falcons offense gains more than 300 total yards:	14-7
The defense holds the opponent to under 300 total yards:	6-0
The Falcons have a 300-yard passer:	2-2
The Falcons have a 100-yard rusher:	11-2
The Falcons have a 100-yard receiver:	6-5
The Falcons win the turnover battle:	10-1
The Falcons are penalized five times or less:	12-8

FINDING THE ENDZONE



Michael Turner has provided the Falcons with a reliable scoring option in his two seasons with the team. In 27 career games in an Atlanta uniform, Turner has tallied 27 rushing touchdowns which ranks tied for second in the NFL over that time period. In 2008, he set a franchise record with 17 rushing TDs and this past year, found the end zone on 10 occasions.

RUSHING TD LEADERS 2008-09

Player	Team	TDs
Adrian Peterson	Min	28
Michael Turner	Atl	27
Maurice Jones-Drew	Jax	27
Thomas Jones	NJY	27

In Week 10 against the Carolina Panthers, Turner finished the contest with nine carries for 111 yards before leaving the game with an injury. He did not find the end zone which signified the end of a seven-game consecutive touchdown streak. Turner's streak is tied for the franchise record with running back T.J. Duckett, who accomplished the feat in 2003.

CONSECUTIVE GAMES WITH A TD IN FALCONS HISTORY

Player	TDs
Michael Turner (2009)	7
T.J. Duckett (2003)	7
Gerald Riggs (1986)	4
Dave Hampton (1975)	4

SPECIAL STARTING POINT



The Falcons kickoff return and coverage units both played impressively in 2009. Kickoff returners Eric Weems, Jerious Norwood, Brian Finneran, Aaron Stecker and Keith Zinger combined to return 55 kicks for an average starting position close to the 27-yard line, which ranked

OPP. AVG. STARTING FIELD POSITION

Team	Kickoffs	Avg. Start
Atlanta	76	21.4
Dallas	79	22.8
Denver	78	22.9
Seattle	69	24.2
San Francisco	73	24.6

sixth in the NFC. More impressively, the kickoff coverage unit held opponents to an average start close to the 21-yard line, which ranked first in the NFL.

The majority of Atlanta's success on the kickoff return unit can be credited to Eric Weems who took over more duties this past season. Weems ranked seventh in the NFC and 12th in the NFL in kickoff return yard average with a 25.3 mark. He also recorded a long return of 62 yards against the Chicago Bears in Week 6.

2009 KICKOFF RETURN YARDS, NFC

Player	Kickoffs	Yards	Avg.
Danny Amendola (Stl)	66	1,618	24.5
Domenik Hixon (NYG)	57	1,291	22.6
LaRod Stephens-Howling (Az)	52	1,257	24.2
Eric Weems (Atl)	48	1,214	25.3
Percy Harvin (Min)	42	1,156	27.5

FALCONS SECOND IN NFC SOUTH WITH 9-7 RECORD



The Falcons concluded the 2009 campaign with a 9-7 record and back to back winning seasons for the first time in the franchise's 44-year history, which includes an 11-5 record in 2008. Atlanta ended the season with three consecutive victories and a series sweep over NFC South Division rival Tampa Bay.



Two-time Pro Bowl Wide receiver Roddy White

Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith has now compiled a two-year coaching record of 20-12 (.625) which is the second-best winning percentage for an Atlanta head coach in their first two seasons with the team. He sits behind Dan Reeves who totaled a 21-11 mark (.656) from 1997-98. Smith also holds a 13-3 record at the Georgia Dome from 2008-09. The Falcons are 10-2 against the NFC, 5-1 against the NFC South Division and 3-1 against AFC opponents. Currently, the Falcons rank tied for second with the best home record over the last two seasons with their 13-3 mark. Part of the home success has come from the leadership of quarterback Matt Ryan. As a starter, Ryan finished the 2009 campaign with a 6-0 home record and is now 13-1 in his two seasons under center at the Dome.

The 2009 season featured many team and individual accomplishments, but none as impressive as wide receiver Roddy White who finished with 85 receptions for 1,153 yards and a career-high 11 touchdowns. He became only the second receiver in franchise history to register three consecutive 1,000-yard receiving seasons. Tight end Tony Gonzalez, who continues to lead all tight ends in NFL history in receptions (999), yards (11,807) and touchdowns (82), became the 21st player in NFL history to surpass 11,000 career receiving yards. Among other accomplishments, Gonzalez set the Falcons single-season reception record for tight ends with 83. Defensively, Jonathan Babineaux led the team with a career-high with six sacks. Cornerback Brent Grimes finished the year with a team-leading six interceptions and safety Thomas DeCoud was named NFC Defensive Player of the Week (week 6) for his performance against against the Chicago Bears.

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE DOME



In two seasons with Head Coach Mike Smith at the helm, the Falcons have pieced-together a 13-3 record at the Georgia Dome. Within that record, the Falcons are 10-2 against the NFC, 5-1 against the NFC South Division and 3-1 against AFC opponents. This season, Atlanta at one point, also held the second-longest home winning streak with eight consecutive wins prior to a loss at the hands of the Philadelphia Eagles in Week 13. Currently, the Falcons rank tied for second with the best home record over the last two seasons with their 13-3 mark. The Minnesota Vikings currently hold the League lead with a 14-2 mark. Below is a look at the top NFL teams in home wins from 2008-09.

14 wins - Minnesota Vikings

13 wins - Atlanta, Dallas, Indianapolis, New England

12 wins - New Orleans, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Tennessee

THE LONG HAUL



The Falcons offense thrived on ball control in 2009. Atlanta averaged 8.97 plays per scoring drive **and led the League with 18 touchdowns on drives of 10 plays or more, eating up large chunks of the clock and not allow opponents time to respond to scores.**

10 PLAY DRIVES

Team	Pos.	10 Play Drives	TDs
Atlanta	170	38	18
Miami	181	36	17
Minnesota	188	29	16
Cincinnati	177	33	15
Indianapolis	174	28	15

Atlanta's ball controlling offense was also illustrated by the fact that the Birds ranked second in the NFL in five minute drives and touchdowns scored on five minute drives. The Falcons were able to score on 73.3 percent of those drives, totaling 120 points. 35-percent of Atlanta's 342 total points scored in 2009 came on drives of five minutes or more.

FIVE MINUTE DRIVES

Team	5 Min. Drives	5 Min. TDs
New Orleans	28	15
Atlanta	30	14
Indianapolis	23	14
Miami	28	14

CUTTING IT CLOSE



In the NFL, seasons and single games are often decided by a narrow margin. Typically, the teams that thrive in those tight game situations are the ones that go on to have success. Since 2008, the Atlanta Falcons are tied for fifth in the NFL with a 5-2 record in games decided by three points or less.

CLOSE GAMES 2008-09, NFC

Team	W	L	Win Pct
Carolina	4	0	.100
Indianapolis	7	1	.880
Minnesota	6	1	.860
Jacksonville	6	2	.750
Atlanta	5	2	.710
Oakland	5	2	.710

PUNCHING IT IN



The Falcons were one of the NFL's best teams in terms of scoring when having a first down inside the opponent's five-yard line. Atlanta scored 16 touchdowns in 17 such situations, adding a field goal on the lone drive not ending in a TD. Atlanta's 17 scores ranked third in the NFL, while its 6.76 average points on goal-to-go drives inside the five-yard line drive ranked second.

GOAL-TO-GO INSIDE THE FIVE YARD LINE SCORING

Team	Drives	Scores
Minnesota	26	26
San Diego	23	21
Atlanta	17	17
Indianapolis	18	17

TURNING THE TABLES



After finishing the 2007 season ranked 23rd in total offense, averaging just 300.8 yards per game, the Falcons have improved in nearly every offensive category over the last two seasons. The Falcons offensive resurgence helped lead back-to-back winning seasons for the first time in franchise history in 2008 and 2009.

2007-09 OFFENSIVE IMPROVEMENT

Year	Yds/G	Yds/P	1st Downs	Pts/G	3D%
2007	300.8	4.9	16.2	16.2	36.3
2008	361.2	5.7	19.6	24.4	43.4
2009	340.4	5.2	20.6	22.7	42.1

SPREADING IT AROUND



In 2008 and 2009, Falcons QB Matt Ryan led a passing attack that ranked 14th in the NFL and surpassed many previous team bests. Much of this success has been a result of the Falcons ability to spread the ball around to a number of different targets. In 2009, the Falcons were one of only four teams that featured two receivers with 83 or more catches.

PLAYERS W/ 83+ CATCHES

Team	Players (catches)
New England	Wes Welker (123) & Randy Moss (83)
Indianapolis	Reggie Wayne (100) & Dallas Clark (100)
Arizona	Larry Fitzgerald (97) & Anquan Boldin (84)
Atlanta	Roddy White (85) & Tony Gonzalez (83)

GAMBLIN' MEN



In order to extend drives, teams often have to take chances on either third-and-long or, in some cases, fourth-and-one situations. In 2009, Atlanta excelled in both areas, **converting all seven of its 4th-and-one attempts and converting 31.1 percent of third-and-long tries, including 30 percent of third down and 10-plus yard attempts.** Of teams that attempted seven or more 4th-and-one tries, the Falcons ranked first in the NFC and tied for the NFL lead with a 100-percent conversion rate.

4TH-AND-1 CONVERSIONS

Team	Att.	Con.	Pct.
Atlanta	7	7	100.0
Miami	8	8	100.0
NY Jets	10	9	90.0
Pittsburgh	8	7	87.5
Chicago	9	7	77.8

*Of teams with 7+ 4th-and-one attempts.

3RD AND 10+

Team	Att.	Con.	Pct.
Jacksonville	61	21	34.4
Atlanta	60	18	30.0
San Diego	46	13	28.3
Cincinnati	69	19	27.5
Green Bay	69	18	26.1

3RD AND LONG*, NFC

Team	Att.	Con.	Pct.
Minnesota	113	39	34.5
Green Bay	108	35	32.4
Atlanta	103	32	31.1
Dallas	112	31	27.7
Washington	112	31	27.7

*3rd downs with six or more yards to go.

NOTABLE NUMBERS



Atlanta's second consecutive winning season brought numerous team and individual accomplishments.

Team:

- Back to back winning seasons for the first time in franchise history (11-5 in 2008 and 9-7 in 2009).
- Most points scored in the first half of a game - 35 at San Francisco on October 11.
- Total first downs in a season - 330 (second-most).
- Fewest sacks per play in a single season - 1 per 21.1 plays (second-fewest).
- The Falcons defense recorded five first half sacks for a loss of 32 yards in a victory over the Washington Redskins. All five sacks came in the first half of play, tying a franchise record which was set twice in 2002 and once more in 2003.
- In the last two seasons, the Falcons defense has compiled a 6-0 record when holding their opponents to under 300 net yards and an 11-2 record when opponents rush for under 100 net yards.
- Atlanta's defense posted a streak of 10 consecutive quarters without a touchdown allowed from the second quarter of Week 15 to the fourth quarter of Week 17.
- The Falcons finished the season with a plus-3 turnover differential in 2009, an improvement from a minus-3 differential, which ranked 21st in the NFL last year.

Head Coach Mike Smith:

- In his first two seasons at the helm, Head Coach Mike Smith is the winningest Falcons head coach at home with 13 victories. He also ranks second in winning percentage in his first two seasons (.625) among all other Falcons head coaches in their first two years.

Running Back Michael Turner:

- Moved into ninth place on the Falcons career rushing list with 2,570 yards from 2008-09.
- Tied the franchise record with seven consecutive games with a touchdown.
- Posted the second-highest average gain for a single season with a 4.89 mark on 178 carries.
- Totaled three consecutive 100-yard games from Weeks 8-10. The streak ranks tied for third in franchise history.

Wide Receiver Roddy White:

- Became only the second wide receiver in franchise history to post three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons after totaling 1,153 yards in 2009.
- Moved into fourth place on the Falcons all-time receiving yardage list with 4,689 yards from 2005-09.
- Moved into fifth place on the Falcons career receptions list with 315 catches from 2005-09.
- Set a franchise record for total receiving yards in one game with 210 at San Francisco on October 11, 2009.
- Set a new franchise record for career 100-yard receiving games with 18 from 2005-09.
- Pieced together a streak of four consecutive games with at least one touchdown reception, which ranks tied for second in club annals.
- Became the first Falcons player in team history to have 80 catches and 1,100-plus yards in three consecutive seasons.

Tight End Tony Gonzalez:

- Moved into 19th place in the NFL's all-time receiving yardage list with 11,807 career yards.
- Became the 21st player in NFL history to record 11,000 career receiving yards.
- Set a new franchise single-season record for receptions by a tight end with 83.

Other players:

- Eric Weems totaled 1,484 combined return yards (1,214 kickoff and 270 punt), which ranks fourth for a single season in club annals.
- Cornerback Brent Grimes tied the team record for interceptions in a game with two against the New York Jets on December 20, 2009.
- Running back Jason Snelling finished with his first career 100-yard contest in the season finale against Tampa Bay. Snelling totaled 147 yards on 25 carries for a 5.9 average. This season he totaled six games of 50-plus yards compared to zero in 2008.
- Center Todd McClure tied the team record for the most consecutive games started with 128 from 2000-09.
- Matt Ryan completed 13 consecutive passes against Carolina in Week 2, marking the longest streak since Jeff George threw 13-straight on November 5, 1995 against Detroit.
- Punter Michael Koenen set a franchise record and tied the mark again with five touchbacks in games against Carolina in Week 2 and Week 10.



NEW TO THE FALCONS IN 2010

KEY ACQUISITIONS



CB Dunta Robinson
5-10, 183 pounds
South Carolina
Free Agent - '10

- In six NFL seasons, has totaled 374 tackles (300 solo tackles), 13 interceptions, four sacks, one fumble recovery and one touchdown.
- Is the Texans all-time leader in interceptions (13) and passes defended (63).
- In his rookie season, was tied for the most interceptions among NFL rookies with six.
- Has started 79 of the 84 games he has played in.
- Named Defensive MVP honors his senior year at the University of South Carolina.



S Matt Giordano
5-11, 207 pounds
California
Free Agent - '10

- Has played in 60 games in his five seasons with six starts.
- In 2009, played in five games totaling four special teams tackles and one defensive tackle.
- Has totaled 79 tackles in his five seasons, including 53 solo tackles, three interceptions, seven passes defended and one touchdown.
- Selected to the All-Pac Ten first-team his senior season at the University of California.



CB Dunta Robinson participating in drills and gearing up for the season at Falcons Mini-Camp in May

2010 DRAFT PICKS



LB Sean Weatherspoon

6-2, 244 pounds

D1 - '10 (Missouri)

- Started his final 41 games at Missouri.
- Totaled 413 tackles (240 solo), 12.5 sacks, 43.5 tackles for loss, 4 interceptions (2 returned for touchdowns), 5 forced fumbles, one fumble recovery, and 17 passes defended.
- Voted team captain his senior season as well as earning Butkus Award finalist, Lombardi Award semifinalist, and Lott Trophy quarterfinalist honors.
- First-team All Big 12 selection from 2007-2009.

DT Corey Peters

6-3, 305 pounds

D3a - '10 (Kentucky)

- Started for three years on the Kentucky Defensive Line.
- Totaled 146 career tackles (83 solo), 27 tackles for loss, 11.5 sacks, 11 passes defended, once forced fumble, and three fumble recoveries.
- Voted the Most Improved Kentucky Defensive Linemen in 2007.

OL Mike Johnson

6-6, 304 pounds

D3b - '10 (Alabama)

- Started in 41 consecutive games and set school career-record by appearing in 54 games playing both guard and tackle.
- Recorded 264 knockdown blocks, 39 touchdown resulting blocks, and 18 downfield blocks.
- All-American Selection in both 2008 and 2009.

C Joe Hawley

6-3, 302 pounds

D4 - '10 (UNLV)

- Started in 33 of the 47 career games he appeared in, including every game in 2008 and 2009.
- Did not give up any sacks at right guard in the 2009 season.

CB Dominique Franks

6-0, 197 pounds

D5a - '10 (Oklahoma)

- Started 28 of 40 career games.
- Totaled 95 tackles (62 solo), six interceptions, 15 passes defended, two fumble recoveries, and one forced fumble.
- Averaged 11.9 yards per return as a punt returner.
- Earned All Big-12 first team honors in 2008 and 2009.

WR Kerry Meier

6-3, 222 pounds

D5b - '10 (Kansas)

- Started 38 of 46 games at Kansas (35 starts at receiver).
- Caught 226 passes for 2,309 yards with 18 touchdowns and an added 417 rushing yards and six touchdowns on 118 carries.
- Holds school career- record with 226 receptions, which also ranks eighth in Big 12 Conference history.
- Completed 134 of 219 passes for 1,612 yards, 17 touchdowns, and 10 interceptions while starting eight games at quarterback in 2006.

S Shann Schillinger

6-0, 200 pounds

D6 - '10 (Montana)

- Played in 57 career games and totaled 255 tackles, 19 passes defended and 10 interceptions.
- Started in 31 of the 57 games competed in.
- Played in the 2009 NCAA Division I National Championship game.

AIMING HIGH



Roddy White concluded his fifth season with the Atlanta Falcons and is already making noise on the team's all-time receiving yardage list. Coupled with a franchise record 1,382-yard season in 2008, White has now recorded three consecutive 1,000-yard campaigns and has moved into fourth place on the club's all-time receiving yardage list. White passed Jim Mitchell (4,410 yards in 11 seasons) in a Week 13 meeting against Philadelphia when he finished the contest with 104 yards on a season-high nine receptions.



Entering the 2010 season, White is 939 yards shy of overtaking Andre Rison for the third spot on the list.

FALCONS ALL-TIME LEADERS, RECEIVING YARDS

Seasons	Player	Yards
1994-2001	Terance Mathis	7,349
1975-83	Alfred Jenkins	6,267
1990-94	Andre Rison	5,633
2005-09	Roddy White	4,689

KEEPING IT TIGHT



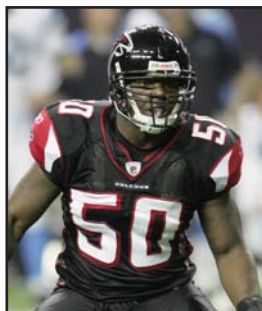
Tony Gonzalez is arguably the best player to compete at his position in NFL history and he is a future Hall of Famer. In 2009, the Falcons acquired the 10-time Pro Bowl tight end in a trade with the Kansas City Chiefs. In exchange, Atlanta gave the Chiefs its second-round selection in the 2010 NFL Draft.

Gonzalez, 6-5, 243 pounds, has established himself as one of the premier tight ends in NFL history. Following the conclusion of the 2009 regular season, he improved his League records for the most receptions (999), receiving yards (11,807) and touchdown catches (82) by a tight end. His 10 Pro Bowl selections are more than any other at his position in the game and he has also earned eight first or second-team *Associated Press* All-Pro selections, his latest coming in 2008.

"I thought that Tony Gonzalez, with his third-down and red zone catches, was the MVP on the offensive side of the ball (in 2009). You may get different opinions from different people, but he was my MVP."

- Head Coach Mike Smith

LEADERS OF THE PACK



Linebacker Curtis Lofton

Following the 2008 season, it was clearly evident that two members of the Falcons would return the following year to take more of a leadership role. Sixth-year safety Erik Coleman and second-year linebacker Curtis Lofton fit the trend as both compiled impressive 2008 campaigns, leading the Falcons to an 11-5 regular season record and their first playoff berth since 2004. Coleman, one of the more tenured players in the secondary, is helping the development of young cornerbacks Brent Grimes, Chevis Jackson and 2009 third-round draft pick Christopher Owens while doing the same for safeties Thomas DeCoud and William Moore. In 2009, Coleman led the secondary in tackles with 139 tackles (96 solo), and contributed with five passes defended and two forced fumbles. In his rookie season, Lofton ranked second in the League in tackles among rookies behind Jerod Mayo (according to STATS, Inc.) and garnered 2008 All-Rookie accolades by *Sporting News* and *Pro Football Weekly*. In



Safety Erik Coleman

2009, he led the Falcons in tackles for the first time in his career with 160 (118 solo). His tackle total is the highest since 2006 (165). Lofton also added four tackles for loss, two forced fumbles and two passes defended. Lofton had a career high of 19 stops against the Patriots last season (9/27) and another career high of solo stops (14) against the Giants (11/22). Coleman also had standout numbers in 2009. Coleman ranked first in the secondary with 139 tackles and added five passes defended and two forced fumbles. The Falcons defense looks to build on the 2009 accomplishments and expand them in the 2010 season.



BACK-TO-BACK



Following a 20-10 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in Week 17, the Falcons concluded the 2009 campaign with a 9-7 record and back to back winning seasons for the first time in franchise's 44-year team history, which includes an 11-5 record in 2008. Atlanta ended the season with three consecutive victories and a series sweep over NFC South Division rival Tampa Bay. Head Coach Mike Smith has now compiled a two-year coaching record of 20-12 (.625), which is the second-best winning percentage for a Falcons head coach in their first two seasons with the team. He sits behind Dan Reeves who totaled a 21-11 mark (.656) from 1997-98.

NOT AT FULL STRENGTH

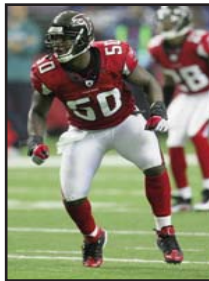


With the fourth-toughest schedule in the NFL and nine Falcons starters missing at least one game because of injury, Atlanta still managed a 9-7 winning season. The starters who missed games include, DT Peria Jerry (13), CB Brian Williams (10), OG Harvey Dahl (5), RB Michael Turner (5), CB Chris Houston (4), DE Jamaal Anderson (3), QB Matt Ryan (2), LT Sam Baker (2) and WR Michael Jenkins (1). The Falcons also placed 11 players on injured reserve last season, including starters Brian Williams, Harvey Dahl and Peria Jerry.

DOMINANCE ON DEFENSE



The Falcons defense finished the 2009 season on a strong note. From Week 10 of the campaign to the season finale, Atlanta improved its rush defense from 26th in the NFL to 10th, allowing an average of 106.8 yards per game. In the last two weeks alone, the Falcons jumped 10 spots. Last season, Fred Taylor of the New England Patriots was the only opposing running back to rush for a 100-yard game against the Falcons as the defense enters 2010 with a streak of 13 games without an opposing 100-yard rusher.



Linebacker Curtis Lofton led the Falcons defense in tackles with 160 in 2009.

TURNING THE CORNER



In 2009, the Falcons improved significantly in turnover differential from the 2008 campaign as Atlanta finished the season with a plus-three margin (tied for 11th in the League). The Falcons totaled 15 interceptions and 13 fumble recoveries while their opponents totaled 25 turnovers. In 2008, the Falcons ended the year with a minus-3 turnover differential which ranked 21st in the NFL.

Atlanta's 15 interceptions were the most since 2007 (15) while the 13 fumble recoveries marked the highest total since 2006 (14). The Falcons 28 takeaways was also the teams highest mark since 2007.

TAKEAWAYS 2006-09

Year	Ints	FR	Takeaways
2009	15	13	28
2008	10	8	18
2007	16	12	28
2006	12	14	26

SACK ATTACK



In 2009, the Falcons totaled 28.0 sacks and outsacked their opponents by a 28.0-27.0 margin. The Falcons offensive line concluded a streak of four consecutive games without a sack after quarterback Matt Ryan was dropped by the Cowboys four times in Week 7. Dating back to the 2008 season, the line has totaled 13 games without a sack. This season, Atlanta went 6-0 when outsacking their opponents and in the last two seasons, has recorded a 17-1 mark. The Falcons witnessed several strong performances for the defense in the sack category, including defensive tackle Jonathan Babineaux who led the team with a career-high 6.0. In the season opener against the Miami Dolphins, defensive end Kroy Biermann dropped Chad Pennington on two occasions while forcing a fumble on the first sack. The quarterback takedowns marked the first multiple-sack game for the second-year pro in his career. Defensive end John Abraham followed Biermann's performance and also totaled two sacks against the Dolphins, marking his 12th and 13th career quarterback takedowns in season opening contests. In 2009, Atlanta has witnessed sacks coming from defensive tackles Thomas Johnson (first and second of his career) and Jonathan Babineaux, defensive ends John Abraham, Jamaal Anderson and Lawrence Sidbury (first of his career), linebackers Mike Peterson and Stephen Nicholas (3.0 sacks set a career-best), safety Thomas DeCoud and cornerback Chevis Jackson.



Defensive end Kroy Biermann posted his first career multiple-sack game against Miami.

SACKING A RECORD



The Atlanta Falcons defense recorded five sacks for a loss of 32 yards in a 31-17 victory over the Washington Redskins in Week 9. All five of the Falcons sacks came in the first half of play, tying a franchise record which was set twice in 2002 and once more in 2003.

SACKS IN THE FIRST HALF OF PLAY

Date	Opponent	1st Half Sacks	Yds. Lost
11/8/09	Washington	5.0	32
9/14/03	Washington	5.0	37
11/24/02	Carolina	5.0	37
11/3/02	Baltimore	5.0	35

The Falcons had sacks coming from defensive linemen, Jonathan Babineaux (2.5), John Abraham (0.5) and Kroy Biermann (1.0) and cornerback Chevis Jackson (1.0).

SACK BREAKDOWN - 11/8/09 VS. WASHINGTON

Down/Dist.	Sack	Poss./Result
3rd and nine	Kroy Biermann (8 yards)	Punt
3rd and seven	Jonathan Babineaux (3 yards)	Punt
1st and 10	Chevis Jackson (9 yards)	Field Goal
3rd and six	Jonathan Babineaux (6 yards)	Field Goal
2nd and six	Jonathan Babineaux (6 yards)	Punt
	John Abraham	

U.S.S. BABINEAUX



Falcons defensive tackle Jonathan Babineaux had his best season as a pro in 2009. Having started in all 16 games, the five-year veteran totaled 58 tackles, a team-leading six sacks, two passes defended, two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries. In a Week 9 meeting against the Washington Redskins, Babineaux posted a single-game career-high with 2.5 sacks and contributed with five tackles en route to a 31-17 victory. His six sacks and 58 tackles set career highs as well as his two fumble recoveries. His two forced fumbles also tied a career-high.

SLOWING DOWN THE 'FINS



In a Week 1 victory against Miami, the Falcons defense provided an impressive performance, nearly posting a shutout against the Dolphins. The defense held Miami scoreless for the first three quarters and 11:39 into the final period of play. Dolphins quarterback Chad Pennington was limited to 176 passing yards while Miami's running backs posted 96 yards collectively. Following the conclusion of the 2009 season, Mike Smith and the Falcons have compiled a 6-0 record when holding opposing offenses to under 300 total net yards since 2008.

WRANGLING THE HERD



The Falcons defensive unit allowed only 178 net yards in a Week 16 victory over the Buffalo Bills. Along with the net yardage total, the Bills managed only 40 net rushing yards and 138 net passing yards. The totals are all the lowest for the Falcons defense in a single game this season. Buffalo's net yardage and net passing marked the lowest totals since a 2008 meeting against Oakland (77 net yards and 10 net passing yards) while the rushing total is the lowest since a 2006 contest against Arizona (26 yards). In the season finale against Tampa Bay, the defense again limited their opponent to 40 net rushing yards as the Buccaneers totaled 23 carries for a 1.7 average.

NOT AN UNLUCKY NUMBER



Quarterback Matt Ryan logged an impressive streak against Carolina in Week 2 completing a stretch of 13 consecutive passes. The streak started at the 6:09 mark in the second quarter and did not end until his first attempt in the fourth quarter. Ryan converted four third downs, added two touchdowns and compiled exactly 100 passing yards in the span of completions. His 13 consecutive completions also marked the most by a Falcons quarterback since Jeff George threw 13-straight on November 5, 1995 against Detroit.

DEFENSE ON THE OFFENSIVE



In 2009, the Falcons defense contributed with three touchdowns. Two of the touchdowns came on fumble returns while the third was an interception return for a touchdown.



Kroy Biermann celebrates with the defense after his fumble recovery for a touchdown.

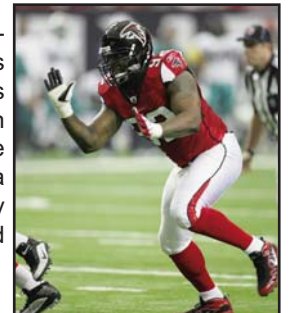
In a Week 8 contest at New Orleans, second-year defensive end Kroy Biermann recovered a fumble that was forced on a Thomas DeCoud sack of Drew Brees. Biermann returned the ball four yards for the score and gave the Falcons a 14-7 lead in the first quarter. The touchdown marked Biermann's first career score and fumble recovery. The recovery for a touchdown was the first by a Falcons defensive player since 2007 when cornerback DeAngelo Hall returned a fumble 56 yards for a touchdown against Tennessee. The recovery for a TD was also the first for a Falcons defensive lineman since 2005 when defensive end Chauncey Davis accomplished the feat with a 24-yard return against the New York Jets.

Defensive end Lawrence Sidbury was drafted in the fourth round (125th overall pick) of the 2009 NFL Draft. As a rookie, Sidbury saw action in all 16 games, and totaled four tackles and one sack. In the third quarter of a Week 16 victory over Buffalo, defensive end Chauncey Davis forced a fumble that was recovered Sidbury and returned for an 11-yard touchdown. The TD and fumble recovery were both firsts for Sidbury and Davis' forced fumble was the second of his career.



Lawrence Sidbury returns this fumble 11 yards for a TD.

The score gave Atlanta a 24-0 advantage en route to a 31-3 win. Sidbury's fumble recovery for a touchdown was the 14th by a defensive lineman in Falcons history. He also became the fourth rookie in club annals to return a fumble for a score along with Randy Marshall (1970), Mike Gann (1985) and Chauncey Davis (2005).



Chauncey Davis recorded his second career forced fumble in a 31-3 win over the Bills in 2009

HOLD THAT LINE

The Falcons defensive unit concluded the season with a streak of 10 consecutive quarters without allowing a touchdown, until Tampa Bay found the end zone in the fourth quarter of the season finale.

TAKE TWO



Safety Thomas DeCoud was named NFC Defensive Player of the Week following his performance in a Falcons victory over Chicago on Sunday Night Football (Week 6). DeCoud intercepted the first two passes of his career off of quarterback Jay Cutler. The first came on the Falcons 12-yard line, stalling a potential Bears scoring drive. The second INT came in the second quarter and led to a Falcons touchdown on their ensuing possession. DeCoud's two picks marked the first multiple-interception game

for a member of the Falcons defense since 2006 when DeAngelo Hall picked off two passes against Tampa Bay. DeCoud also became the first player to garner NFC Defensive Player of the Week accolades since 2006 (John Abraham Week 1, Lawyer Milloy Week 13).



PICKING A WIN



Atlanta cornerback Brent Grimes and safety Thomas DeCoud combined for three interceptions in a Falcons Week 15 victory over the New York Jets. Grimes recorded a career-day after finishing with two interceptions, five tackles and two passes defended. The interceptions marked a team-leading third and fourth for Brent in 2009. Grimes' first interception came in the second quarter on a first-down play. He then intercepted Jets quarterback Mark Sanchez on New York's final offensive possession of the game as New York was attempting a comeback victory.

MOVING UP THE CHARTS



Falcons tight end Tony Gonzalez caught six passes for 67 yards in a Week 10 meeting against Carolina and moved into 19th place in NFL history in career receiving yards, moving past Rod Smith who competed in the League for 12 seasons. Gonzalez now sits behind Don Maynard for the 18th spot.

CAREER LEADERS, RECEIVING YARDS

Rank	Player	Seasons	Rec. Yards
16th	Charlie Joiner	17	12,069
17th	Michael Irvin	12	11,904
18th	Don Maynard	15	11,834
19th	Tony Gonzalez	13	11,807

GRIMEY IN THE SECONDARY



Falcons cornerback Brent Grimes led the team in interceptions in 2009 with six. His total is tied for the 10th highest in franchise history and is the most since 2005 when DeAngelo Hall picked off the same number of passes. Grimes' six picks established a career-high as the second-year pro from Shippensburg University also contributed with 67 tackles, one fumble recovery and 13 passes defended in nine starts. Grimes intercepted Buccaneers quarterback Josh Freeman in the fourth quarter of a Week 17 contest, which marked his fourth pick in the last three contests. Grimes totaled his first-career multiple interception game in Week 15 against the Jets.

LOFTON LEADS



In just his second season as the Falcons starting middle line-backer, Curtis Lofton led the team in tackles for the first time in his career with 160, stops according to coaches breakdown. The total is the highest for a member of the Falcons defense since 2006 (165). Lofton also ranked tied for seventh in the NFL with 133 tackles, according to STATS, Inc.

GO FOR IT



Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith showed that he had faith in his offense when facing fourth down situations in 2009. Atlanta finished the year ranked fourth in the NFL in fourth down efficiency, having converted 16 of 23 attempts for a 69.6 percentage. On six occasions in 2009, the Falcons finished a contest perfect in fourth down conversions. Those games include, Carolina (Week 2), New England (Week 3), Dallas (Week 7) the New York Giants (Week 11), Tampa Bay (Week 12) and the New York Jets (Week 14). The Jets led the League in fourth down percentage with a 75.0 mark followed by Miami (72.2) and Cincinnati (71.4).

4TH DOWN CONVERSIONS

Team	Att.	Con.	Eff.
NY Jets	20	15	75.0
Miami	18	13	72.2
Cincinnati	14	10	71.4
Atlanta	23	16	69.6
Four tied at	12	8	66.7

MIKE P. IS PIVOTAL



Mike Peterson ranked second on the Falcons in tackles with 140 during his first season in an Atlanta uniform. He also contributed with one sack, one INT, six passes defended and two forced fumbles. In the first two games of the season, Peterson's turnovers led to 16 total Falcons points (nine against Miami and seven vs. Carolina).

SOLID CONNECTION



Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan and wide receiver Roddy White connected for nine touchdowns in 2009, but none were more impressive than the 90-yard touchdown the two produced against San Francisco in a Week 5 meeting. Already hooking up for a 31-yard score in the first quarter, Ryan and White struck again eight minutes into the second. On a third-and-four play, Ryan dropped back and threw a strike to White who sprinted the length of the field into the end zone. The 90-yard play became a career-high for both players, the third longest pass completion in franchise history and the longest play from scrimmage since 2006.



LONGEST PASS COMPLETIONS IN FALCONS HISTORY

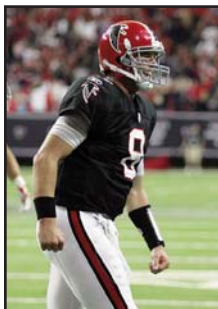
Yards	Play	Date
98t	Bobby Hebert to Michael Haynes vs. N.O	10/12/93
94t	Chris Chandler to Jamal Anderson vs. Car.	9/23/01
90t	Matt Ryan to Roddy White at S.F.	10/11/09

In a Week 16 victory over the Buffalo Bills, Ryan's first quarter touchdown pass to wide receiver Roddy White was the eighth pass and catch combination between the two from 40-plus yards and the sixth from 40-plus yards that went for a touchdown dating back to 2008.

40-PLUS YARD CONNECTIONS, RYAN TO WHITE SINCE 2008

Opponent	Yards	Result
9/7/08 vs. Detroit	46	W, 34-21
9/21/08 vs. Kansas City	70t	W, 38-14
10/26/08 at Philadelphia	55t	L, 27-14
12/7/08 at New Orleans	59	L, 29-25
10/11/09 at San Francisco	90t	W, 45-10
10/18/09 vs. Chicago	40t	W, 21-14
11/2/09 at New Orleans	68t	L, 35-27
12/27/09 vs. Buffalo	42t	W, 31-3

PROVIDING BACKUP

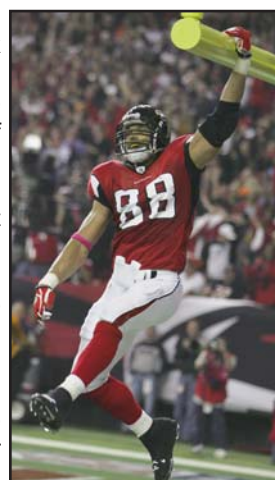


In three games in 2009, filling in for an injured Matt Ryan, QB Chris Redman completed 69 of 119 passes for 781 yards with four touchdowns and three interceptions. In all three contests, he threw for over 200 passing yards and against the Saints, compiled 303 yards (second highest passing total) and a 50-yard touchdown to wide receiver Michael Jenkins, which was his longest pass since the 2007 season finale against Seattle.

DIFFERENCE MAKER



In 2009, the Falcons witnessed a big contribution from the passing attack with a new look that featured tight end Tony Gonzalez. Atlanta totaled 235 more net passing yards and an average of 14.7 more passing yards per game in 2009 compared to last season. The performance from Gonzalez at the tight end position was impressive. In 2008, Justin Peelle was the team's leading receiver among tight ends with 15 receptions for 159 yards and two touchdowns. Gonzalez finished the 2009 campaign with 83 receptions for 867 yards and six touchdowns. A difference of 68 receptions, 708 yards and four touchdowns.



Total net passing per game (net yards and average)

2008: 3,336 net yards, 208.5 avg. per game

2009: 3,571 net yards, 223.2 avg. per game

A difference of 235 net yards and 14.7 avg. per game

Difference between leading tight end receiver

2008: Justin Peelle, 15 receptions for 159 yards and two touchdowns

2009: Tony Gonzalez, 83 receptions for 867 yards and six touchdowns

A difference of 68 receptions, 708 yards and four touchdowns

THIRD AND ROAD



Tony Gonzalez finished the 2009 season ranked tied for sixth in third down receiving with 26 receptions.

In 2009, the Falcons offense ranked fourth in the NFC in road third down percentage with a 44.0 mark. Atlanta also ranked tied for third in the NFL in total road third down conversions with 48, one first down shy of the League lead. The Falcons third down conversions led to the third-highest League ranking for total first downs on the road with 168.

ROAD 3RD DOWN CONVERSIONS, NFC

Team	Att.	Con.	Pct.
Green Bay	104	49	47.1
NY Giants	107	48	44.9
Carolina	110	49	44.5
Atlanta	109	48	44.0
Washington	107	46	43.0

CAREER MARKS



In a 28-20 victory over the Carolina Panthers in Week 2, quarterback Matt Ryan set two career highs as he completed 21 of 27 passes for 220 yards, three touchdowns and one interception (122.2 passer rating). The three TDs, all of which came in the first half, set a new single-game career-high while his 78.0 completion percentage was also a career-high. Ryan found tight end Tony Gonzalez for a 24-yard touchdown at the end of the first quarter and then completed touchdown strikes to running back Jason Snelling and wide receiver Roddy White in the second quarter. The touchdown to Snelling was the first receiving score of his career, while White's touchdown marked the first for a wide receiver this season. At the conclusion of the season, Ryan set a new career-high with 22 touchdown passes, six more than his 2008 total (16).

HOME COOKING



Matt Ryan continued to build an impressive resume when competing at the Georgia Dome. In 2008 as a rookie, Ryan posted a 7-1 record at home while completing 121 of 188 passes (64.4 percent) for 1,777 yards and six touchdowns. The record was the best since 2004 when the team reached the NFC Championship Game. Ryan improved the trend this past season as the Falcons finished 6-0 at the Georgia Dome when he started. Ryan has improved his career home record to 13-1 at the dome and in 2009 has completed 99 of 158 passes for 1,034 yards, 11 touchdowns and four INTs for a 94.2 passer rating.

TAKE A PASS



Steve Bartkowski

At the conclusion of his rookie season, quarterback Matt Ryan logged 3,440 passing yards, the highest total for a Falcons quarterback in a season since Jeff George threw for a franchise season-record 4,143 yards in a pass-first offense in 1995. Ryan's total was the highest for a Falcons rookie as he became only the second first-year quarterback in NFL history to reach the 3,000-yard passing plateau along with Colts quarterback Peyton Manning. In 2009, Ryan missed two games because of a toe injury and fell 84 yards shy of another 3,000-yard campaign. His two-year passing yardage total (2008-09) of 6,356 yards however, ranks third in Falcons annals.



Jeff George

PASSING PERFORMANCES

Player	Years/Passing Totals
Jeff George	1994 (3,734), 1995 (4,143) - 7,877
Steve Bartkowski	1980 (3,544), 1981 (3,830) - 7,374
Matt Ryan	2008 (3,440), 2009, (2,916) - 6356

WHAT A CATCH



In just his first season, tight end Tony Gonzalez made an impressive contribution to the Atlanta Falcons offense. Following a Week 13 meeting against the Philadelphia Eagles, Gonzalez set a new franchise record for receptions by a tight end in a single season, topping Alge Crumpler's old mark of 65 which he set in 2005. In 2009, Gonzalez totaled 83 catches,

Gonzalez's 83 receptions in 2009 also ranked third in the NFL among tight ends. He finished 17 receptions away from the top spot and Dallas Clark of the Indianapolis Colts. Since his rookie season in 1997, Gonzalez has led the NFL in receptions among all tight ends on seven occasions (1999, 2000, '01, '03, '04, '07, and '08).

FALCONS TIGHT ENDS SINGLE SEASON RECEPTION TOTALS

Player	Season	Rec.	Yards
Tony Gonzalez	2009	83	867
Alge Crumpler	2005	65	877
Alge Crumpler	2006	56	780

2009 TIGHT ENDS

Player	Rec.	Yards
Dallas Clark	100	1,106
Jason Witten	94	1,030
Tony Gonzalez	83	867
Antonio Gates	79	1,157
Vernon Davis	78	965

DID YOU KNOW?

Falcons tight end Tony Gonzalez is just one catch shy of recording his 1,000 career reception. With 999 catches, Gonzalez ranks first all-time among tight ends in receptions and seventh all-time among all receivers. WR Terrell Owens is the only active player with more receptions (1006) than Gonzalez.

RECEPTION HALL



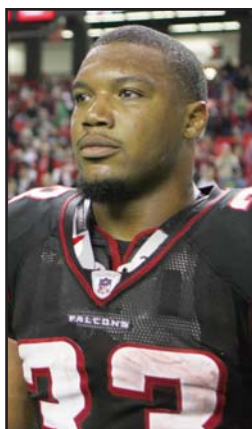
Tight end Tony Gonzalez remains the only player at his position in NFL history to record six 100-yard receiving games in a single year (2000 and 2004). Reaching the century mark on six occasions led to Gonzalez's highest receiving yardage totals for a season in his career. In 2000, he finished with 1,203 yards while setting his career-high of 1,258 yards in 2004. Gonzalez is also the only tight end in NFL history to record 900 or more receiving yards in seven seasons and currently stands as only the third tight end (Ozzie Newsome and Shannon Sharpe) in League history to lead their respective franchises in all-time receiving. Gonzalez's career receptions (999), receiving yards (11,807) and touchdowns (82) already top Pro Football Hall of Famers Charlie Sanders, Jackie Smith, Mike Ditka, John Mackey, Ozzie Newsome, Kellen Winslow and Dave Casper.



TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL



The Falcons organization knew one of the steps to improving the team's offense following the 2007 season would be the acquisition of a running back. Just days into free agency, General Manager Thomas Dimitroff signed Michael Turner who was ready to break into a starting role following four seasons in San Diego. Turner's solo performance in 2008 was among the best in franchise history (1,699 rushing yards ranking third for a single season). His numbers that season trumped any running back since 1998 when Jamal Anderson set the club record with 1,846 yards.



Although Turner missed five games in 2009 because of ankle injury, he was still able to lead the team in rushing while totaling 178 carries for 871 yards and 10

touchdowns. Turner moved into ninth-place in Falcons career rushing with 2,570 yards over the last two seasons and tied the club record with seven consecutive games scoring at least one touchdown this past season.

RECORD WITH TURNER 2008-09

Note	Falcons Record
Rushes for 100+ yards	10-2
Totals 50+ yards in 1st half	10-2
Records 20+ carries	13-2
Averages 4.5+ yards/carry	8-2
Scores one or more TDs	12-5
Posts big run (20+ yards)	9-5

FINDING THE ENDZONE



Michael Turner has provided the Falcons with a reliable scoring option in his two seasons with the team. In 27 career games in an Atlanta uniform, Turner has tallied 27 rushing touchdowns, which ranks tied for second in the NFL over that time period. In 2008, he set a franchise record with 17 rushing TDs and in 2009, Turner found the end zone on 10 occasions.

CONSECUTIVE GAMES WITH A TD

Player	Year	TDs
Michael Turner	2009	7
T.J. Duckett	2003	7
Gerald Riggs	1986	4
Dave Hampton	1975	4
*Falcons History		

RUSHING TDs 2008-09

Player	TDs
Adrian Peterson, Min	28
Michael Turner, Atl	27
Maurice Jones-Drew, Jax	27
Thomas Jones, NYJ	27

In Week 10 against the Carolina Panthers, Turner finished the contest with nine carries for 111 yards before leaving the game with an injury. He did not find the end zone, which signified the end of a seven-game consecutive touchdown streak. Turner's streak is tied for the franchise record with running back T.J. Duckett who accomplished the feat in 2003.

BIG PLAY RODDY



Roddy White has established himself as a deep threat in his career with the Falcons. With a 1,200-receiving yard campaign in 2007, White followed his performance with a career-high and franchise record 1,382 yards en route to his first Pro Bowl berth in 2008. In his career, he has posted 45 "big plays" or receptions of 25-plus yards and ranks second in franchise history behind club leader Terance Mathis who caught 49 receptions of 25-plus yards in his eight-year

career with the Falcons. Two of White's "Big Plays" came against San Francisco in Week 5 with touchdown receptions of 90 and 31 yards.

FALCONS LEADERS IN "BIG PLAYS"

Player	Seasons	25+ Yard Plays
Terance Mathis	1994-2001 (8)	49
Roddy White	2005-2009 (5)	45
Bert Emanuel	1994-1997 (4)	36

Fourteen of White's 45 receptions of 25-plus yards came in 2008. Below is a look at the Falcons franchise leaders for plays of 25-plus yards in a season.

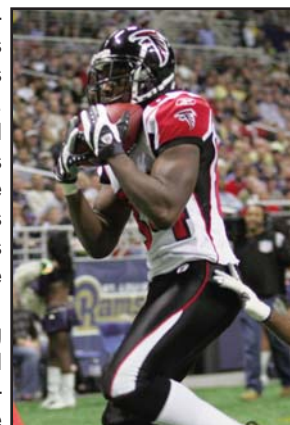
SINGLE SEASON BIG PLAY LEADERS

Player	Seasons	25+ Yard Plays
Michael Haynes	1991	16
Roddy White	2008	14
Andre Rison	1994	14

AIMING HIGH



Roddy White concluded his fifth season with the Atlanta Falcons and is already making noise on the team's all-time receiving yardage list. Coupled with a franchise record 1,382-yard season in 2008, White has now recorded three consecutive 1,000-yard campaigns and has moved into fourth-place on the club's all-time receiving yardage list. White passed Jim Mitchell (4,410 yards in 11 seasons) in a Week 13 meeting against Philadelphia when he finished the contest with 104 yards on a season-high nine receptions. Entering the 2010 season, White is 939 yards shy of overtaking Andre Rison for the third spot on the list.



SINGLE SEASON BIG PLAY LEADERS

Season	Player	Yards
1994-2001	Terance Mathis	7,349
1975-83	Alfred Jenkins	6,267
1990-94	Andre Rison	5,633
2005-09	Roddy White	4,689

SACK ATTACK



After 10 seasons in the NFL, it's no surprise to opposing offenses that DE John Abraham makes a difference on every snap. His 89.5 career sacks currently rank third in the League among active players (2000-09) and in 2008, he posted a career-best and franchise record 16.5 quarterback takedowns. To take it a step further, Abraham's 20 multiple-sack games over his career have made an even bigger difference as he has contributed to a collective 15-5 record.

JOHN ABRAHAM'S MULTI-SACK GAMES

Year	2+ Sack Gms	Team Record
2009	One	Falcons 1-0
2008	Four	Falcons 4-0
2007	Two	Falcons 1-1
2006	One	Falcons 1-0
2005	Two	NY Jets 1-1
2004	Two	NY Jets 2-0
2003	Two	NY Jets 0-2
2002	Three	NY Jets 2-1
2001	Two	NY Jets 2-0
2000	One	NY Jets 1-0
Total	20 Games	15-5

WELCOME TO ATLANTA



In his first game as a Falcon, LB Mike Peterson posted 11 tackles, one interception and one forced fumble against the Miami Dolphins. Peterson would go on to start all 16 games and ranked second on the team with 140 total tackles. He also added one sack, one interception, two forced fumbles and five passes defended. Peterson has collected double-digit tackles in 80 career games and 15-or-more tackles 24 times.



Peterson played for head coach Mike Smith for five seasons (2003-07) as a member of the Jacksonville Jaguars

KEEPING PACE



Following his fourth season in an Atlanta Falcons uniform, defensive end John Abraham has already broken into the top 10 sack leaders list in franchise history, holding down a tie for the seventh spot with 36.0 sacks. He is the shortest tenured Falcons player ranked on the list and is 2.5 sacks shy of a tie for the sixth spot with Don Smith.

FALCONS SACK LEADERS

Player	Years	Sacks
Claude Humphrey	1968-78 (11)	94.5
Chuck Smith	1992-98 (7)	58.5
Patrick Kerney	1999-2006 (8)	58.0
John Zook	1969-75 (7)	47.0
Travis Hall	1995-2004 (10)	41.5
Don Smith	1979-84 (6)	38.5
John Abraham	2006-09 (4)	36.0
Jeff Merrow	1975-83 (9)	36.0
Brady Smith	2000-05 (6)	32.0
Lester Archambeau	1993-99 (7)	31.0

TACK IT ON



Following his 12th NFL season, Mike Peterson has remained consistent at the linebacker position finishing with over 100 tackles in each season he has competed in all 16 games including this past year. The Florida graduate recorded a career-high with 190 stops in 2005, while contributing with six sacks, three interceptions and one touchdown en route to being named to the *USA Today's* All-Joe team. At the conclusion of the 2009 campaign, Peterson ranks fifth among active players in tackles according to each team's coaching breakdown.

NFL TACKLE LEADERS ACTIVE PLAYERS

Player	Tackles
Ray Lewis	2,346
London Fletcher	1,867
Keith Brooking	1,627
Lawyer Milloy	1,585
Mike Peterson	1,504

TACKLING THE TOP



Linebacker Curtis Lofton recorded his first career sack and forced fumble against Philadelphia last season.

2009 TACKLE LEADERS

Player	Games	Tackles
Patrick Willis	16	152
Jon Beason	16	142
London Fletcher	16	142
Barrett Ruud	16	142
Ray Lewis	16	134
Curtis Lofton	16	133

In Curtis Lofton's 2008 rookie season, the Oklahoma graduate made such an impression on the Falcons defense that he was named the starter at middle linebacker. Lofton recorded 108 tackles (67 solo) and was named to *The Sporting News* and *Pro Football Weekly* All-Rookie team. Lofton also ranked second in the NFL in tackles among rookies behind Jerod Mayo of the New England Patriots in 2008. This past season, Lofton continued the pace as he ranked tied for sixth the NFL in tackles with 133 (according to STATS, Inc.).

RUSHING TO CONTAIN



In two seasons in a Falcons uniform, linebacker Curtis Lofton has played a pivotal role in leading Atlanta to a 11-2 record when holding opponents to under 100 net rushing yards. Last season, the Falcons were a perfect 5-0 which included an overtime win at home against Tampa Bay. In 2009, Atlanta finished with a 6-2 record when holding opponents to under 100 net rushing yards.

I AM IRON MAN



In recent seasons the importance of stability at the center position has increased due to the increased complexity of defensive schemes around

CONSECUTIVE GAMES STARTED

Player	Team	Games
Casey Wiegmann	DEN	143
Todd McClure	ATL	128
Olin Kreutz	CHI	118

the League. **C Todd McClure** has been the lynchpin of the offensive line for 12 seasons. The venerable lineman has started an impressive 128 consecutive games heading into the 2010 season. Only Chargers center Casey Wiegmann has started more consecutive games at the position than McClure. The center also anchored a Falcons offensive line that allowed just 27 sacks in 2009, the 8th fewest in the NFL. With an Opening Day start at Pittsburgh in 2010, McClure will break the club record for consecutive starts. He currently shares the record with Keith Brooking, who started 128 straight games from 2000-08.



POINT OF NO RETURN



In 2009, Falcons punter/kick-off specialist Michael Koenen ranked tied for second in the NFL with 28 touchbacks. Part of Koenen's success in 2009 came after he tied a franchise record on two occasions with five touchbacks in contests against the Carolina Panthers. He also posted three touchbacks against the San Francisco 49ers in Week 5 of the season.

NFL KICKOFF COVERAGE

Kicker	Touchbacks
David Buehler, Dal	29
Michael Koenen, Atl	28
Matt Prater, Den	28
Thomas Morstead	27
Olindo Mare	22

HANDS UP



On top of playing an important role as a back-up, DE Chauncey Davis was just as pivotal on the special teams unit in 2009. In a Week 10 meeting at Carolina, Davis blocked a Panthers 51-yard field goal attempt in the third quarter. The block was the first for Atlanta since a 2008 meeting at San Diego. He struck again five weeks later against the New York Jets at the Meadowlands. In the fourth quarter with the Falcons trailing 7-3, Davis blocked a 37-yard field goal, which gave the Falcons possession at their own 27-yard line. Atlanta's ensuing drive proved to be the game winner. The two blocked field goals for Davis were the first of his career.



2009 NFL RANKINGS

Offensive Rankings - 2009 Week by Week

	Total	Rush	Pass	NFC	NFL
Week 1 (after Mia.)	281.0	68.0	213.0	9-13-8	19-26-18
Week 2 (after Car.)	326.0	109.5	216.5	8-9-9	18-16-17
Week 3 (after N.E.)	303.0	92.3	210.7	11-12-9	23-23-16
Week 4 (BYE)	303.0	92.3	210.7	12-14-11	23-25-20
Week 5 (after S.F.)	346.5	106.3	240.3	6-7-8	13-15-14
Week 6 (after Chi.)	327.8	98.6	229.2	8-13-7	18-24-15
Week 7 (after Dal.)	322.8	102.8	220.0	8-9-9	19-19-17
Week 8 (after N.O.)	339.9	111.1	228.7	7-9-8	17-17-14
Week 9 (after Was.)	335.6	119.9	215.8	8-6-10	16-11-19
Week 10 (after Car.)	342.8	126.1	216.7	8-5-10	14-9-17t
Week 11 (after NYG)	343.7	122.5	221.2	8-7-10	14-12-16
Week 12 (after T.B.)	339.5	118.2	221.3	8-8-10	16-13-17
Week 13 (after Phi.)	335.8	113.4	222.3	8-8-9	16-15-15
Week 14 (after N.O.)	340.1	111.5	228.5	8-8-8	16-18-13
Week 15 (after NYJ)	332.8	109.7	223.1	8-8-9	18-20-15
Week 16 (after Buf.)	336.7	112.9	223.8	8-8-8	17-17-13
Week 17 (after T.B.)	340.4	117.3	223.2	8-6-8	11-6-14

Defensive Rankings - 2009 Week by Week

	Total	Rush	Pass	NFC	NFL
Week 1 (after Mia.)	259.0	96.0	163.0	6-10-4	9-21-8
Week 2 (after Car.)	349.5	120.0	229.5	12-9-9	22-19-17
Week 3 (after N.E.)	381.3	136.0	245.3	12-12-10t	24-24-22t
Week 4 (BYE)	381.3	136.0	245.3	15-14-14	30-25-27
Week 5 (after S.F.)	355.8	127.0	228.8	11-14-11	20-24-22
Week 6 (after Chi.)	359.2	118.2	241.0	13-13-11	24-23-21
Week 7 (after Dal.)	368.3	117.7	250.7	13-12-14	25-23-26
Week 8 (after N.O.)	378.1	121.7	256.4	16-13-16	29-23-31
Week 9 (after Was.)	369.9	123.5	246.4	13-13-14	24-24-27
Week 10 (after Car.)	371.0	130.3	240.7	13-14-13	25-26-28
Week 11 (after NYG)	379.5	126.1	253.4	14-12-14	28-24-29
Week 12 (after T.B.)	274.8	98.2	176.6	14-11-13	27-23-27
Week 13 (after Phi.)	374.4	119.8	254.7	15-11-14	28-23-29
Week 14 (after N.O.)	375.7	117.8	257.8	15-11-15	29-23-30
Week 15 (after NYJ)	371.3	116.5	254.8	14-10-15	28-20-30
Week 16 (after Buf.)	358.4	111.4	247.0	17-17-13	23-17-28
Week 17 (after T.B.)	348.9	106.9	241.9	16-15-14	21-10t-28

BLOCK PARTY



In 2009, the Falcons signed free agent CB Brian Williams to help solidify the cornerback position. Not only did Williams succeed in the secondary, but the veteran also provided a valuable punch on special teams. In a Week 2 home contest against Carolina, Williams blocked a Panthers punt at the 1:39 mark in the first quarter. The block was recovered by linebacker Mike Peterson, and led to an Atlanta touchdown on the ensuing drive. Williams' block punt was the first for the Falcons since a 2004 regular season meeting against Seattle at Qwest Field. Prior to being placed on injured reserve (Week 6), Williams contributed with 23 tackles (17 solo), one interception, two passes defensed and two fumble recoveries, one of which was returned 53 yards (Week 1 against Miami), marking Atlanta's longest fumble recovery since 2007.

LEAD FOOT



Falcons punter Michael Koenen played an integral role in an Atlanta 28-20 victory over the Carolina Panthers in Week 2. The five-year veteran, who serves as the Falcons kickoff specialist, tied a team record with five touchbacks on five attempts. Koenen also recorded three punts for 149 yards giving him a 49.7 average and a 44.0 net mark. His final punt of the contest (57 yards) in the fourth quarter set the Panthers back at their own 26-yard line, distancing their chances for a comeback. Koenen again tied his record of five touchbacks against the Panthers in Week 10 while establishing a career-long 70-yard punt and in two contests against Carolina last season, he posted 10 touchbacks on 10 attempts.



STARTING NEW



On December 2, 2009, the Atlanta Falcons signed Matt Bryant to take over the place kicking duties. Following his eighth NFL season, the Baylor graduate has converted 145 of 178 field goals (81.5 pct.) and 191 of 195 PATs for 626 career points. In four seasons with the Buccaneers, he amassed an .831 field goal percentage, ranking him as the most accurate kicker in team history. In his last season with Tampa Bay (2008) Bryant ranked fourth in the NFL with a club-record and career-high 131 points.

LONG AND GONE



On a sunny October day in Tampa, Florida, the Buccaneers and Philadelphia Eagles were battling at Raymond James Stadium. Kicker Matt Bryant had already connected on field goal attempts of 30 and 44 yards, but Tampa Bay was facing a 21-20 deficit with 33 seconds remaining in the contest. After an Eagles touchdown, the Bucs started their final drive at their own 36-yard line and moved the ball 20 yards to the Philadelphia 44-yard line. With four seconds remaining on the clock, Head Coach Jon Gruden trotted out Bryant for a 62-yard attempt. The snap was perfect and on a day with little wind, the veteran kicker split the uprights with a few yards to spare. The kick, which ranks as the second-longest game-winning field goal in NFL history also gave the Buccaneers their second win of the season. Bryant earned NFC Special Teams Player of the Week honors for his efforts against the Eagles.



TOP OF HIS GAME



In four occasions in his eight-year NFL career, K Matt Bryant has earned NFC Special Teams Player of the Week honors. Two of the weekly honors came in 2002 as a member of the New York Giants while the other two (2006 and 2008) were earned as a member of Tampa Bay. Below is a look at Bryant's player of the week honors.

2002 (Week 3) - Converted all three field goal attempts from 33, 21 and 47 yards in a 9-6 victory over the Seattle Seahawks. His final kick from 47 yards proved to be the game-winner with 2:04 left in the fourth quarter.

2002 (Week 11) - Split the uprights on all four field goal attempts from 43, 34, 33 and 19 yards. Accounted for the last nine points of the game between either team as the Giants defeated the Washington Redskins by a 19-17 margin.

2006 (Week 7) - Was three for three on field goal attempts from 30, 44 and the game-winning 62-yard field goal in a victory over Philadelphia as time expired. The 62-yarder still ranks as the second-longest game-winning field goal in NFL history.

2008 (Week 4) - Played a major role in a Buccaneers 30-21 win over Green Bay after connecting on three field goal attempts from 23, 36 and 24 yards. Also split the uprights on three PATs for a total of 12 points on the day.

Bryant was also named the NFC Special Teams Player of the Month for December of 2007 after totaling 42 points on 10 of 11 field goal attempts and 12 points after touchdown. He was perfect in field goals in three games and his lone miss came from 53 yards.

BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW...

- The oldest player - **K Matt Bryant**, 35 years old (5/29/75)
- The youngest player - **C Joe Hawley**, 21 years old (10/22/88)
- The tallest player - **OT Garrett Reynolds**, 6-7
- The shortest player - **K Matt Bryant**, **CB Chris Owens**, **RB Antone Smith**, **CB Daylan Walker** and **WR Eric Weems**, 5-9
- The heaviest player - **OT Tyson Clabo**, 331 pounds
- The lightest player - **CB Chris Owens**, 179 pounds
- Most seasons with the Falcons - **C Todd McClure**, 11 seasons
- Most seasons in the NFL - **TE Tony Gonzalez**, 13 seasons
- The farthest distance a player has to travel from their hometown to Flowery Branch, Ga. - **OT Will Svitek** is 4,800 miles from his birthplace of Prague, Czech Republic.
- The shortest distance a player has to travel from their hometown to Flowery Branch, Ga. - **TE Michael Palmer** is 42.7 miles away from his hometown of Stone Mountain, GA.
- The college that is represented the most on the roster - **LSU, Alabama, California** and **Wake Forest** with three players each.
- The state that is represented the most on the roster - The state of **California** with 12 players.

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PRESEASON OPPONENTS



The Atlanta Falcons 2010 preseason includes home games against the Kansas City Chiefs (Week 1) and the New England Patriots (Week 2) in addition to road meetings at Miami (Week 3) and Jacksonville (Week 4). The Falcons home matchup against the Patriots will be broadcast nationally on Thursday, August 19, 2010 at 8 p.m. on FOX.

Preseason Week 1 - vs. Kansas City Chiefs Friday, August 13, 2010, 8:00 p.m.



The Falcons and Chiefs have not met in the pre-season since 1988 in a game in Atlanta where the Chiefs walked away with the victory, beating the Falcons 27-13. This meeting will be the first time that Falcons TE Tony Gonzalez will face his former team. Falcons General Manager, Thomas Dimitroff and Chiefs General Manager Scott Pioli worked together for many years in New England before they both assumed their current positions.

Preseason Week 2 - vs. New England Patriots Thursday, August 19, 2010, 8:00 p.m.



The Falcons will battle the Patriots in the pre-season for the first time since 2006. The Falcons won the last matchup at home 26-23. The Thursday night matchup will only be the second pre-season game between the two teams since 1990. Atlanta General Manager Thomas Dimitroff worked for the Patriots for six years (2002-2007) before joining the Falcons in 2008.



Preseason Week 3 - at Miami Dolphins Friday, August 27, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

The Falcons and the Dolphins have met nine times in pre-season play and Atlanta has compiled a 5-4 record. The last meeting of the two clubs was a 2005 pre-season game in Miami that the Falcons won by the score of 20-17. This will be the sixth time the Falcons have made the trip to South Florida for a pre-season matchup.

Preseason Week 4 - at Jacksonville Jaguars Thursday, September 2, 2010, 7:30 p.m.



The final pre-season game against Jacksonville will be the seventh time the two teams have faced one another in the pre-season. Atlanta and Jacksonville have split the previous six contest games 3-3. The last time the two teams met in pre-season play was in 2008 in Jacksonville, where the Jaguars took the win 20-17. This will also be the sixth time that Atlanta has traveled south to Jacksonville for the pre-season matchup. Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith served as the Jaguars Defensive Coordinator (2003-07) before he was named head coach of the Falcons in 2008.

BREAKING DOWN THE DRAFT



The Atlanta Falcons selected seven players in the 2010 NFL Draft, including four defensive players and three offensive players. The Falcons acquired St. Louis' fifth round selection (135th overall) in exchange for selections in the fifth (149th overall) and sixth (189th overall) rounds. Atlanta also acquired Detroit's sixth round selection (171st overall) and a conditional pick in the 2011 NFL Draft in exchange for cornerback Chris Houston.



Falcons first round pick LB Sean Weatherspoon

With the 19th overall selection in the first round of the 2010 NFL Draft, the Atlanta Falcons selected Outside Linebacker Sean Weatherspoon from the University of Missouri. Weatherspoon became the first linebacker selected by the Falcons in the first round of the NFL Draft since Keith Brooking was picked 12th overall in 1998. He is also the fourth player in Falcons history selected from the University of Missouri and the second in as many years (William Moore, second round pick in 2009).

Weatherspoon was only the third player in school history to lead the team in tackles three times in a career as his 413 stops ranks third in school history and tenth on the Big 12 Conference all-time list. During his senior season, Weatherspoon was voted a second-team All-America selection as well as being a Butkus Award finalist, Lombardi Award semifinalist, and Lott Trophy quarterfinalist. Weatherspoon was also named a first-team All-Big 12 selection from 2007-2009, as he averaged 132 tackles per season.

"We were very excited to have the opportunity to take an outside linebacker that is going to ramp up our speed, our enthusiasm, and our athleticism. In our minds, he is a guy that is going to be a four down player for us," said Falcons General Manager Thomas Dimitroff.

"We have a very urgent and passionate football player that can play both the Sam and Will linebacker in our scheme," said Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith. Smith also added "Sean was very productive at the University of Missouri and I think he is a guy that is able to matchup and play tight ends as well as play in the box".

FALCONS 2010 DRAFT CLASS

Rd.	Player	Pos	College
1 (19)	Sean Weatherspoon	OLB	Missouri
3 (83)	Corey Peters	DT	Kentucky
3 (98)	Mike Johnson	OL	Alabama
4 (117)	Joe Hawley	OL	UNLV
*5 (135)	Dominique Franks	CB	Oklahoma
5 (165)	Kerry Meier	WR	Kansas
^6 (171)	Shann Schillinger	S	Montana

*Falcons acquired St. Louis' fifth round selection (135th) in exchange for selections in the fifth (149th) and sixth (189th) rounds.

^Falcons acquired Detroit's sixth round selection (171st) and a conditional pick in the 2011 NFL Draft in exchange for CB Chris Houston.

2010 Atlanta Falcons Alphabetical Roster

#	PLAYER	POS	H	W	Birthdate	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	HOMETOWN
55	Abraham, John	DE	6-4	263	5/6/78	11	South Carolina	Tr '06 (NYJ)	Timmonsville, SC
59	Adkins, Spencer	LB	5-11	242	5/16/87	2	Miami (Fla.)	D6 '09	Naples, FL
48	Agnone, Robbie	TE	6-6	260	10/2/85	1	Delaware	FA '10	Etters, PA
98	Anderson, Jamaal	DE	6-6	289	2/6/86	4	Arkansas	D1 '07	Little Rock, AR
95	Babineaux, Jonathan	DT	6-2	296	10/12/81	6	Iowa	D2 '05	Port Arthur, TX
72	Baker, Sam	OT	6-5	307	5/30/85	3	USC	D1b '08	Tustin, CA
11	Bergeron, Troy	WR	6-2	195	12/3/83	1	No College	FA '09	New Orleans, LA
71	Biermann, Kroy	DE	6-3	260	9/12/85	3	Montana	D5b '08	Hardin, MT
63	Blalock, Justin	OG	6-4	329	12/20/83	4	Texas	D2a '07	Dallas, TX
42	Brock, Eric	S	6-0	204	4/4/85	1	Auburn	FA '10	Alexander City, AL
67	Bruggeman, Rob	C	6-4	293	3/21/86	1	Iowa	FA '09	Cedar Rapids, IA
3	Bryant, Matt	K	5-9	200	5/29/75	9	Baylor	FA '09	Orange, TX
16	Buckley, Tim	WR	6-1	185	8/19/88	R	Alcorn State	FA '10	Madison, MS
36	Bush, Rafael	S	5-11	180	5/12/87	R	South Carolina State	FA '10	Williston, SC
77	Clabo, Tyson	OT	6-6	331	10/17/81	6	Wake Forest	FA '06	Knoxville, TN
26	Coleman, Erik	S	5-10	207	5/6/82	7	Washington State	FA '08	Sacramento, CA
73	Dahl, Harvey	OG	6-5	305	6/24/81	4	Nevada-Reno	FA '07	Fallon, NV
37	Daniels, Dominique	CB	6-2	190	6/20/88	R	Nicholls State	FA '10	Gibson, FL
92	Davis, Chauncey	DE	6-2	262	1/27/83	6	Florida State	D4 '05	Bartow, FL
28	DeCoud, Thomas	S	6-2	205	3/19/85	3	California	D3c '08	Vallejo, CA
83	Douglas, Harry	WR	6-0	182	9/16/84	2	Louisville	D3b '08	Jonesboro, GA
86	Finneran, Brian	WR	6-5	210	1/31/76	10	Villanova	FA '00	Mission Viejo, CA
24	Franks, Dominique	CB	6-0	192	10/8/87	R	Oklahoma	D5a '10	Tulsa, OK
27	Giordano, Matt	S	5-11	200	10/16/82	6	California	FA '10	Clovis, CA
88	Gonzalez, Tony	TE	6-5	243	2/27/76	14	California	Tr '09 (KC)	Torrance, CA
20	Grimes, Brent	CB	5-10	181	7/19/83	3	Shippensburg	FA '07	Philadelphia, PA
17	Harvey, Brandyn	WR	6-4	205	11/6/87	R	Villanova	FA '10	Spring Valley, CA
38	Derricks, Gabe	CB	6-3	185	1/8/88	R	San Diego	FA '10	Oak Park, CA
61	Hawley, Joe	C	6-3	310	10/22/88	R	UNLV	D4 '10	Yorba Linda, CA
64	Henley, Rajon	DE	6-3	244	3/22/88	R	Texas Tech	FA '10	Galveston, TX
22	Jackson, Chevis	CB	5-11	193	12/11/85	3	LSU	D3a '08	Mobile, AL
51	James, Robert	LB	5-11	220	12/26/83	1	Arizona State	D5a '08	Glendale, AZ
12	Jenkins, Michael	WR	6-4	217	6/18/82	7	Ohio State	D1b '04	Tampa, FL
94	Jerry, Peria	DT	6-2	294	8/23/84	1	Mississippi	D1 '09	Batesville, MS
79	Johnson, Mike	OG	6-6	305	4/2/87	R	Alabama	D3b '10	Pensacola, FL
93	Johnson, Thomas	DT	6-2	304	6/24/81	3	Middle Tennessee State	FA '09	Memphis, TN
43	Johnson, Weston	LB	6-3	233	1/15/87	R	Wyoming	FA '10	Wray, CO
49	Klecko, Dan	FB	5-11	275	1/12/81	7	Temple	FA '10	Chester, PA
9	Koenen, Michael	P	5-11	198	7/13/82	6	Western Washington	FA '05	Ferndale, WA
97	Lewis, Trey	DT	6-3	316	5/23/85	3	Washburn	D6a '07	Topeka, KS
50	Lofton, Curtis	LB	6-0	242	6/2/86	3	Oklahoma	D2 '08	Kingfisher, OK
62	McClure, Todd	C	6-1	296	2/16/77	12	LSU	D7a '99	Baton Rouge, LA
80	Meier, Kerry	WR	6-3	220	11/12/86	R	Kansas	D5b '10	Pittsburg, KS
25	Moore, William	S	6-0	218	5/18/85	1	Missouri	D2 '09	Hayti, MO
34	Mughelli, Ovie	FB	6-1	252	6/10/80	8	Wake Forest	UFA '07 (Bal)	Boston, MA
30	Nance, Dimitri	RB	5-10	218	2/18/88	R	Arizona State	FA '10	Eules, TX
54	Nicholas, Stephen	LB	6-3	230	5/1/83	4	South Florida	D4a '07	Jacksonville, FL
32	Norwood, Jerious	RB	5-11	209	7/29/83	5	Mississippi State	D3 '06	Jackson, MS
76	Ojinnaka, Quinn	OG	6-5	299	4/23/84	5	Syracuse	D5 '06	Seabrook, MD
21	Owens, Christopher	CB	5-9	179	12/1/86	2	San Jose State	D3 '09	Los Angeles, CA
81	Palmer, Michael	TE	6-5	260	1/18/88	R	Clemson	FA '10	Stone Mountain, GA
87	Peelle, Justin	TE	6-4	251	3/15/79	9	Oregon	FA '08	Fresno, CA
91	Peters, Corey	DT	6-3	295	6/8/88	R	Kentucky	D3a '10	Louisville, KY
53	Peterson, Mike	LB	6-1	233	6/17/76	12	Florida	UFA '09 (Jax)	Gainesville, FL
8	Redman, Chris	QB	6-3	229	7/7/77	8	Louisville	FA '07	Louisville, KY
75	Reynolds, Garrett	OT	6-7	317	7/1/87	2	North Carolina	D5b '09	Knoxville, TN
23	Robinson, Dunta	CB	5-10	182	4/11/82	7	South Carolina	FA '10	Athens, GA
66	Romberg, Brett	C	6-2	293	10/10/79	7	Miami (Fla.)	FA '09	Windsor, Ontario
2	Ryan, Matt	QB	6-4	213	5/17/85	3	Boston College	D1a '08	Exton, PA
39	Schillinger, Shann	S	6-0	202	5/22/86	R	Montana	D6 '10	Baker, MT
69	Schlueter, Blake	C	6-2	279	4/22/86	1	TCU	FA '09	Ganado, TX
90	Sidbury, Lawrence	DE	6-3	265	2/6/86	2	Richmond	D4 '09	Cheltenham, MD
35	Smith, Antone	RB	5-9	190	9/17/85	1	Florida State	FA '09	Pahokee, FL
44	Snelling, Jason	RB	5-11	223	12/29/83	4	Virginia	D7 '07	Chester, VA
96	Stephens, Emmanuel	DE	6-3	255	2/17/87	R	Mississippi	FA '10	Houston, TX
15	Strickland, Andy	WR	6-0	197	9/2/87	1	Wofford	FA '09	Gaffney, SC
74	SVitek, Will	OT	6-6	309	1/8/82	5	Stanford	FA '09	Prague, Czech Republic
33	Turner, Michael	RB	5-10	244	2/13/82	7	Northern Illinois	UFA '08 (SD)	Waukegan, IL
65	Valdez, Jose	OG	6-6	324	12/13/86	1	Arkansas	FA '09	St. Francis, WI
99	Walker, Vance	DT	6-2	307	4/26/87	2	Georgia Tech	D7 '09	Fort Mill, SC
56	Weatherspoon, Sean	LB	6-2	245	12/29/87	R	Missouri	D1 '10	Jasper, TX
14	Weems, Eric	WR	5-9	194	7/4/85	3	Bethune-Cookman	FA '07	Ormond Beach, FL
84	White, Roddy	WR	6-0	212	11/2/81	6	Alabama-Birmingham	D1 '05	James Island, SC
29	Williams, Brian	DB	5-11	202	7/2/79	9	North Carolina State	FA '09	High Point, NC
4	Wilson, John Parker	QB	6-2	218	10/17/85	1	Alabama	FA '09	Hoover, AL
52	Wire, Coy	LB	6-0	225	11/7/78	9	Stanford	FA '08	Camp Hill, PA
19	Wolfe, Ryan	WR	6-2	210	11/23/86	R	UNLV	FA '10	Santa Clarita, CA
45	Woods, Bear	LB	6-0	245	1/22/87	R	Troy	FA '10	MacClenny, FL
82	Zelenka, Joe	LS	6-3	260	3/9/76	12	Wake Forest	FA '09	Cleveland, OH
89	Zinger, Keith	TE	6-4	258	10/9/84	2	LSU	D7b '08	Leesville, LA

COACHING STAFF

Mike Smith (Head Coach), Bill Musgrave (Assistant Head Coach/Quarterbacks),

Mike Mularkey (Offensive Coordinator), Brian VanGorder (Defensive Coordinator), Keith Armstrong (Special Teams Coordinator),

Jonas Beauchemin (Strength and Conditioning Assistant), Paul Boudreau (Offensive Line), Gerald Brown (Running Backs),

Mark Collins (Defensive Assistant), Paul Dunn (Assistant Offensive Line), Jeff Fish (Director of Athletic Performance), Ray Hamilton (Defensive Line),

Bill Hughan (Assistant Strength and Conditioning), Tim Lewis (Secondary), Glenn Pires (Linebackers), Alvin Reynolds (Defensive Backs), Terry Robiskie (Wide Receivers),

Chris Scelfo (Tight Ends), Eric Sutulovich (Assistant Special Teams), Glenn Thomas (Offensive Assistant),

Andrew Weidinger (Administrative Assistant to the Head Coach/Offense).

2010 Atlanta Falcons Numerical Roster

#	PLAYER	POS	H	W	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	HOMETOWN
2	Matt Ryan	QB	6-4	213	25	3	Boston College	D1a '08	Exton, PA
3	Matt Bryant	K	5-9	200	35	9	Baylor	FA '09	Orange, TX
4	John Parker Wilson	QB	6-2	218	24	1	Alabama	FA '09	Hoover, AL
8	Chris Redman	QB	6-3	229	32	8	Louisville	FA '07	Louisville, KY
9	Michael Koenen	P	5-11	198	27	6	Western Washington	FA '05	Ferndale, WA
11	Troy Bergeron	WR	6-2	195	26	1	No College	FA '09	New Orleans, LA
12	Michael Jenkins	WR	6-4	217	27	7	Ohio State	D1b '04	Tampa, FL
14	Eric Weems	WR	5-9	194	24	3	Bethune-Cookman	FA '07	Ormond Beach, FL
15	Andy Strickland	WR	6-0	197	22	1	Wofford	FA '09	Gaffney, SC
16	Tim Buckley	WR	6-1	185	21	R	Alcorn State	FA '10	Madison, MS
17	Brandyn Harvey	WR	6-4	205	22	R	Villanova	FA '10	Spring Valley, CA
19	Ryan Wolfe	WR	6-2	210	23	R	UNLV	FA '10	Santa Clarita, CA
20	Brent Grimes	CB	5-10	181	26	3	Shippensburg	FA '07	Philadelphia, PA
21	Christopher Owens	CB	5-9	179	23	2	San Jose State	D3 '09	Los Angeles, CA
22	Chevis Jackson	CB	5-11	193	24	3	LSU	D3a '08	Mobile, AL
23	Dunta Robinson	CB	5-10	182	28	8	South Carolina	FA '10	Athens, GA
24	Dominique Franks	CB	6-0	192	22	R	Oklahoma	D5a '10	Tulsa, OK
25	William Moore	S	6-0	218	25	1	Missouri	D2 '09	Hayti, MO
26	Erik Coleman	S	5-10	207	28	7	Washington State	FA '08	Sacramento, CA
27	Matt Giordano	S	5-11	200	27	6	California	FA '10	Clovis, CA
28	Thomas DeCoud	S	6-2	205	25	3	California	D3c '08	Vallejo, CA
29	Brian Williams	DB	5-11	202	30	9	North Carolina State	FA '09	High Point, NC
30	Dimitri Nance	RB	5-10	218	22	R	Arizona State	FA '10	Eules, TX
32	Jerious Norwood	RB	5-11	209	26	5	Mississippi State	D3 '06	Jackson, MS
33	Michael Turner	RB	5-10	244	28	7	Northern Illinois	UFA '08 (SD)	Waukegan, IL
34	Ovie Mughelli	FB	6-1	252	29	8	Wake Forest	UFA '07 (Bal)	Boston, MA
35	Antone Smith	RB	5-9	190	24	1	Florida State	FA '09	Pahokee, FL
36	Rafael Bush	S	5-11	180	22	R	South Carolina State	FA '10	Williston, SC
37	Dominique Daniels	CB	6-2	190	22	R	Nicholls State	FA '10	Gibson, FL
38	Gabe Derrick	CB	6-3	185	22	R	San Diego	FA '10	Oak Park, CA
39	Shann Schillinger	S	6-0	202	23	R	Montana	D6 '10	Baker, MT
42	Eric Brock	S	6-0	204	4/4/85	1	Auburn	FA '10	Alexander City, AL
43	Weston Johnson	LB	6-3	233	23	R	Wyoming	FA '10	Wray, CO
44	Jason Snelling	RB	5-11	223	26	4	Virginia	D7 '07	Chester, VA
45	Bear Woods	LB	6-0	245	23	R	Troy	FA '10	MacClenny, FL
48	Robbie Agnone	TE	6-6	260	24	1	Delaware	FA '10	Etters, PA
49	Dan Klecko	FB	5-11	275	29	7	Temple	FA '10	Chester, PA
50	Curtis Lofton	LB	6-0	242	23	3	Oklahoma	D2 '08	Kingfisher, OK
51	Robert James	LB	5-11	220	26	1	Arizona State	D5a '08	Glendale, AZ
52	Coy Wire	LB	6-0	225	31	9	Stanford	FA '08	Camp Hill, PA
53	Mike Peterson	LB	6-1	233	33	12	Florida	UFA '09 (Jax)	Gainesville, FL
54	Stephen Nicholas	LB	6-3	230	27	4	South Florida	D4a '07	Jacksonville, FL
55	John Abraham	DE	6-4	263	32	11	South Carolina	Tr '06 (NYJ)	Timmons, SC
56	Sean Weatherspoon	LB	6-2	245	22	R	Missouri	D1 '10	Jasper, TX
59	Spencer Adkins	LB	5-11	242	23	2	Miami (Fla.)	D6 '09	Naples, FL
61	Joe Hawley	C	6-3	310	21	R	UNLV	D4 '10	Yorba Linda, CA
62	Todd McClure	C	6-1	296	33	12	LSU	D7a '99	Baton Rouge, LA
63	Justin Blalock	OG	6-4	329	26	4	Texas	D2a '07	Dallas, TX
64	Rajon Henley	DE	6-3	244	22	R	Texas Tech	FA '10	Galveston, TX
65	Jose Valdez	OG	6-6	324	23	1	Arkansas	FA '09	St. Francis, WI
66	Brett Romberg	C	6-2	293	30	7	Miami (Fla.)	FA '09	Windsor, Ontario
67	Rob Bruggeman	C	6-4	293	24	1	Iowa	FA '09	Cedar Rapids, IA
69	Blake Schluter	C	6-2	279	24	1	TCU	FA '09	Ganado, TX
71	Kroy Biermann	DE	6-3	260	24	3	Montana	D5b '08	Hardin, MT
72	Sam Baker	OT	6-5	307	25	3	USC	D1b '08	Tustin, CA
73	Harvey Dahl	OG	6-5	305	28	4	Nevada-Reno	FA '07	Fallon, NV
74	Will Svitek	OT	6-6	309	28	5	Stanford	FA '09	Prague, Czech Republic
75	Garrett Reynolds	OT	6-7	317	22	2	North Carolina	D5b '09	Knoxville, TN
76	Quinn Ojinnaka	OG	6-5	299	26	5	Syracuse	D5 '06	Seabrook, MD
77	Tyson Clabo	OT	6-6	331	28	6	Wake Forest	FA '06	Knoxville, TN
79	Mike Johnson	OG	6-6	305	23	R	Alabama	D3b '10	Pensacola, FL
80	Kerry Meier	WR	6-3	220	23	R	Kansas	D5b '10	Pittsburg, KS
81	Michael Palmer	TE	6-5	260	22	R	Clemson	FA '10	Stone Mountain, GA
82	Joe Zelenka	LS	6-3	260	34	12	Wake Forest	FA '09	Cleveland, OH
83	Harry Douglas	WR	6-0	182	25	2	Louisville	D3b '08	Jonesboro, GA
84	Roddy White	WR	6-0	212	28	6	Alabama-Birmingham	D1 '05	James Island, SC
86	Brian Finneran	WR	6-5	210	34	10	Villanova	FA '00	Mission Viejo, CA
87	Justin Peelle	TE	6-4	251	31	9	Oregon	FA '08	Fresno, CA
88	Tony Gonzalez	TE	6-5	243	34	14	California	Tr '09 (KC)	Torrance, CA
89	Keith Zinger	TE	6-4	258	25	2	LSU	D7b '08	Leesville, LA
90	Lawrence Sidbury	DE	6-3	265	24	2	Richmond	D4 '09	Cheltenham, MD
91	Corey Peters	DT	6-3	295	21	R	Kentucky	D3a '10	Louisville, KY
92	Chauncey Davis	DE	6-2	262	27	6	Florida State	D4 '05	Bartow, FL
93	Thomas Johnson	DT	6-2	304	28	3	Middle Tennessee State	FA '09	Memphis, TN
94	Peria Jerry	DT	6-2	294	25	1	Mississippi	D1 '09	Batesville, MS
95	Jonathan Babineaux	DT	6-2	296	28	6	Iowa	D2 '05	Port Arthur, TX
96	Emmanuel Stephens	DE	6-3	255	23	R	Mississippi	FA '10	Houston, TX
97	Trey Lewis	DT	6-3	316	25	3	Washburn	D6a '07	Topeka, KS
98	Jamaal Anderson	DE	6-6	289	24	4	Arkansas	D1 '07	Little Rock, AR
99	Vance Walker	DT	6-2	307	23	2	Georgia Tech	D7 '09	Fort Mill, SC

* Birthdays updated through the month of May

COACHING STAFF

Mike Smith (Head Coach), Bill Musgrave (Assistant Head Coach/Quarterbacks),

Mike Mularkey (Offensive Coordinator), Brian VanGorder (Defensive Coordinator), Keith Armstrong (Special Teams Coordinator),

Jonas Beauchemin (Strength and Conditioning Assistant), Paul Boudreau (Offensive Line), Gerald Brown (Running Backs),

Mark Collins (Defensive Assistant), Paul Dunn (Assistant Offensive Line), Jeff Fish (Director of Athletic Performance), Ray Hamilton (Defensive Line),

Bill Hughan (Assistant Strength and Conditioning), Tim Lewis (Secondary), Glenn Pires (Linebackers), Alvin Reynolds (Defensive Backs), Terry Robiskie (Wide Receivers),

Chris Scelfo (Tight Ends), Eric Sotulovich (Assistant Special Teams), Glenn Thomas (Offensive Assistant),

Andrew Weidinger (Administrative Assistant to the Head Coach/Offense).

2010 Atlanta Falcons Roster by Experience

#	PLAYER	POS	H	W	Birthdate	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	HOMETOWN
88	Gonzalez, Tony	TE	6-5	243	2/27/76	14	California	Tr '09 (KC)	Torrance, CA
62	McClure, Todd	C	6-1	296	2/16/77	12	LSU	D7a '99	Baton Rouge, LA
53	Peterson, Mike	LB	6-1	233	6/17/76	12	Florida	UFA '09 (Jax)	Gainesville, FL
82	Zelenka, Joe	LS	6-3	260	3/9/76	12	Wake Forest	FA '09	Cleveland, OH
55	Abraham, John	DE	6-4	263	5/6/78	11	South Carolina	Tr '06 (NYJ)	Timmonsville, SC
86	Finneran, Brian	WR	6-5	210	1/31/76	10	Villanova	FA '00	Mission Viejo, CA
3	Bryant, Matt	K	5-9	200	5/29/75	9	Baylor	FA '09	Orange, TX
87	Peelle, Justin	TE	6-4	251	3/15/79	9	Oregon	FA '08	Fresno, CA
29	Williams, Brian	DB	5-11	202	7/2/79	9	North Carolina State	FA '09	High Point, NC
52	Wire, Coy	LB	6-0	225	11/7/78	9	Stanford	FA '08	Camp Hill, PA
34	Mughelli, Ovie	FB	6-1	252	6/10/80	8	Wake Forest	UFA '07 (Bal)	Boston, MA
8	Redman, Chris	QB	6-3	229	7/7/77	8	Louisville	FA '07	Louisville, KY
26	Coleman, Erik	S	5-10	207	5/6/82	7	Washington State	FA '08	Sacramento, CA
12	Jenkins, Michael	WR	6-4	217	6/18/82	7	Ohio State	D1b '04	Tampa, FL
49	Klecko, Dan	FB	5-11	275	1/12/81	7	Temple	FA '10	Chester, PA
23	Robinson, Dunta	CB	5-10	182	4/11/82	7	South Carolina	FA '10	Athens, GA
66	Romberg, Brett	C	6-2	293	10/10/79	7	Miami (Fla.)	FA '09	Windsor, Ontario
33	Turner, Michael	RB	5-10	244	2/13/82	7	Northern Illinois	UFA '08 (SD)	Waukegan, IL
95	Babineaux, Jonathan	DT	6-2	296	10/12/81	6	Iowa	D2 '05	Port Arthur, TX
77	Clabo, Tyson	OT	6-6	331	10/17/81	6	Wake Forest	FA '06	Knoxville, TN
92	Davis, Chauncey	DE	6-2	262	1/27/83	6	Florida State	D4 '05	Bartow, FL
27	Giordano, Matt	S	5-11	200	10/16/82	6	California	FA '10	Clovis, CA
9	Koenen, Michael	P	5-11	198	7/13/82	6	Western Washington	FA '05	Ferndale, WA
84	White, Roddy	WR	6-0	212	11/2/81	6	Alabama-Birmingham	D1 '05	James Island, SC
32	Norwood, Jerious	RB	5-11	209	7/29/83	5	Mississippi State	D3 '06	Jackson, MS
76	Ojinnaka, Quinn	OG	6-5	299	4/23/84	5	Syracuse	D5 '06	Seabrook, MD
74	Svitek, Will	OT	6-6	309	1/8/82	5	Stanford	FA '09	Prague, Czech Republic
98	Anderson, Jamaal	DE	6-6	289	2/6/86	4	Arkansas	D1 '07	Little Rock, AR
63	Blalock, Justin	OG	6-4	329	12/20/83	4	Texas	D2a '07	Dallas, TX
73	Dahl, Harvey	OG	6-5	305	6/24/81	4	Nevada-Reno	FA '07	Fallon, NV
54	Nicholas, Stephen	LB	6-3	230	5/1/83	4	South Florida	D4a '07	Jacksonville, FL
44	Snelling, Jason	RB	5-11	223	12/29/83	4	Virginia	D7 '07	Chester, VA
72	Baker, Sam	OT	6-5	307	5/30/85	3	USC	D1b '08	Tustin, CA
71	Biermann, Kroy	DE	6-3	260	9/12/85	3	Montana	D5b '08	Hardin, MT
28	DeCoud, Thomas	S	6-2	205	3/19/85	3	California	D3c '08	Vallejo, CA
20	Grimes, Brent	CB	5-10	181	7/19/83	3	Shippensburg	FA '07	Philadelphia, PA
22	Jackson, Chevis	CB	5-11	193	12/11/85	3	LSU	D3a '08	Mobile, AL
93	Johnson, Thomas	DT	6-2	304	6/24/81	3	Middle Tennessee State	FA '09	Memphis, TN
97	Lewis, Trey	DT	6-3	316	5/23/85	3	Washburn	D6a '07	Topeka, KS
50	Lofton, Curtis	LB	6-0	242	6/2/86	3	Oklahoma	D2 '08	Kingfisher, OK
2	Ryan, Matt	QB	6-4	213	5/17/85	3	Boston College	D1a '08	Exton, PA
14	Weems, Eric	WR	5-9	194	7/4/85	3	Bethune-Cookman	FA '07	Ormond Beach, FL
59	Adkins, Spencer	LB	5-11	242	5/16/87	2	Miami (Fla.)	D6 '09	Naples, FL
83	Douglas, Harry	WR	6-0	182	9/16/84	2	Louisville	D3b '08	Jonesboro, GA
21	Owens, Christopher	CB	5-9	179	12/1/86	2	San Jose State	D3 '09	Los Angeles, CA
75	Reynolds, Garrett	OT	6-7	317	7/1/87	2	North Carolina	D5b '09	Knoxville, TN
90	Sidbury, Lawrence	DE	6-3	265	2/6/86	2	Richmond	D4 '09	Cheltenham, MD
99	Walker, Vance	DT	6-2	307	4/26/87	2	Georgia Tech	D7 '09	Fort Mill, SC
89	Zinger, Keith	TE	6-4	258	10/9/84	2	LSU	D7b '08	Leesville, LA
48	Agnone, Robbie	TE	6-6	260	10/2/85	1	Delaware	FA '10	Etters, PA
42	Brock, Eric	S	6-0	204	4/4/85	1	Auburn	FA '10	Alexander City, AL
11	Bergeron, Troy	WR	6-2	195	12/3/83	1	No College	FA '09	New Orleans, LA
67	Bruggeman, Rob	C	6-4	293	3/21/86	1	Iowa	FA '09	Cedar Rapids, IA
51	James, Robert	LB	5-11	220	12/26/83	1	Arizona State	D5a '08	Glendale, AZ
94	Jerry, Peria	DT	6-2	294	8/23/84	1	Mississippi	D1 '09	Batesville, MS
25	Moore, William	S	6-0	218	5/18/85	1	Missouri	D2 '09	Hayti, MO
69	Schlueter, Blake	C	6-2	279	4/22/86	1	TCU	FA '09	Ganado, TX
35	Smith, Antone	RB	5-9	190	9/17/85	1	Florida State	FA '09	Pahokee, FL
15	Strickland, Andy	WR	6-0	197	9/2/87	1	Wofford	FA '09	Gaffney, SC
65	Valdez, Jose	OG	6-6	324	12/13/86	1	Arkansas	FA '09	St. Francis, WI
4	Wilson, John Parker	QB	6-2	218	10/17/85	1	Alabama	FA '09	Hoover, AL
16	Buckley, Tim	WR	6-1	185	8/19/88	R	Alcorn State	FA '10	Madison, MS
36	Bush, Rafael	S	5-11	180	5/12/87	R	South Carolina State	FA '10	Williston, SC
24	Franks, Dominique	CB	6-0	192	10/8/87	R	Oklahoma	D5a '10	Tulsa, OK
17	Harvey, Brandyn	WR	6-4	205	11/6/87	R	Villanova	FA '10	Spring Valley, CA
37	Daniels, Dominique	CB	6-2	190	6/20/88	R	Nicholls State	FA '10	Gibsonton, FL
38	Derricks, Gabe	CB	6-3	185	1/8/88	R	San Diego	FA '10	Oak Park, CA
61	Hawley, Joe	C	6-3	310	10/22/88	R	UNLV	D4 '10	Yorba Linda, CA
64	Henley, Rajon	DE	6-3	244	3/22/88	R	Texas Tech	FA '10	Galveston, TX
79	Johnson, Mike	OG	6-6	305	4/2/87	R	Alabama	D3b '10	Pensacola, FL
43	Johnson, Weston	LB	6-3	233	1/15/87	R	Wyoming	FA '10	Wray, CO
80	Meier, Kerry	WR	6-3	220	11/12/86	R	Kansas	D5b '10	Pittsburg, KS
30	Nance, Dimitri	RB	5-10	218	2/18/88	R	Arizona State	FA '10	Euless, TX
81	Palmer, Michael	TE	6-5	260	1/18/88	R	Clemson	FA '10	Stone Mountain, GA
91	Peters, Corey	DT	6-3	295	6/8/88	R	Kentucky	D3a '10	Louisville, KY
39	Schillinger, Shann	S	6-0	202	5/22/86	R	Montana	D6 '10	Baker, MT
96	Stephens, Emmanuel	DE	6-3	255	2/17/87	R	Mississippi	FA '10	Houston, TX
56	Weatherspoon, Sean	LB	6-2	245	12/29/87	R	Missouri	D1 '10	Jasper, TX
19	Wolfe, Ryan	WR	6-2	210	11/23/86	R	UNLV	FA '10	Santa Clarita, CA
45	Woods, Bear	LB	6-0	245	1/22/87	R	Troy	FA '10	MacClenny, FL

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Andrew Weidinger (Administrative Assistant to the Head Coach/Offense).

2010 Atlanta Falcons Roster By Position

#	PLAYER	POS	H	W	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	HOMETOWN
<u>QUARTERBACKS (4)</u>									
2	Matt Ryan	QB	6-4	213	25	3	Boston College	D1a '08	Exton, PA
4	John Parker Wilson	QB	6-2	218	24	1	Alabama	FA '09	Hoover, AL
8	Chris Redman	QB	6-3	229	32	8	Louisville	FA '07	Louisville, KY
<u>RUNNING BACKS (7)</u>									
30	Dimitri Nance	RB	5-10	218	22	R	Arizona State	FA '10	Eules, TX
32	Jerious Norwood	RB	5-11	209	26	5	Mississippi State	D3 '06	Jackson, MS
33	Michael Turner	RB	5-10	244	28	7	Northern Illinois	UFA '08 (SD)	Waukegan, IL
34	Ovie Mughelli	FB	6-1	252	29	8	Wake Forest	UFA '07 (Bal)	Boston, MA
35	Antone Smith	RB	5-9	190	24	1	Florida State	FA '09	Pahokee, FL
44	Jason Snelling	RB	5-11	223	26	4	Virginia	D7 '07	Chester, VA
49	Dan Klecko	FB	5-11	275	29	7	Temple	FA '10	Chester, PA
<u>WIDE RECEIVERS (11)</u>									
11	Troy Bergeron	WR	6-2	195	26	1	No College	FA '09	New Orleans, LA
12	Michael Jenkins	WR	6-4	217	27	7	Ohio State	D1b '04	Tampa, FL
14	Eric Weems	WR	5-9	194	24	3	Bethune-Cookman	FA '07	Ormond Beach, FL
15	Andy Strickland	WR	6-0	197	22	1	Wofford	FA '09	Gaffney, SC
16	Tim Buckley	WR	6-1	185	21	R	Alcorn State	FA '10	Madison, MS
17	Brandyn Harvey	WR	6-4	205	22	R	Villanova	FA '10	Spring Valley, CA
19	Ryan Wolfe	WR	6-2	210	23	R	UNLV	FA '10	Santa Clarita, CA
80	Kerry Meier	WR	6-3	220	23	R	Kansas	D5b '10	Pittsburg, KS
83	Harry Douglas	WR	6-0	182	25	2	Louisville	D3b '08	Jonesboro, GA
84	Roddy White	WR	6-0	212	28	6	Alabama-Birmingham	D1 '05	James Island, SC
86	Brian Finneran	WR	6-5	210	34	10	Villanova	FA '00	Mission Viejo, CA
<u>TIGHT ENDS (5)</u>									
48	Agnone, Robbie	TE	6-6	260	24	1	Delaware	FA '10	Etters, PA
81	Michael Palmer	TE	6-5	260	22	R	Clemson	FA '10	Stone Mountain, GA
87	Justin Peelle	TE	6-4	251	31	9	Oregon	FA '08	Fresno, CA
88	Tony Gonzalez	TE	6-5	243	34	14	California	Tr '09 (KC)	Torrance, CA
89	Keith Zinger	TE	6-4	258	25	2	LSU	D7b '08	Leesville, LA
<u>OFFENSIVE LINE (14)</u>									
61	Joe Hawley	C	6-3	310	21	R	UNLV	D4 '10	Yorba Linda, CA
62	Todd McClure	C	6-1	296	33	12	LSU	D7a '99	Baton Rouge, LA
63	Justin Blalock	OG	6-4	329	26	4	Texas	D2a '07	Dallas, TX
65	Jose Valdez	OG	6-6	324	23	1	Arkansas	FA '09	St. Francis, WI
66	Brett Romberg	C	6-2	293	30	7	Miami (Fla.)	FA '09	Windsor, Ontario
67	Rob Bruggeman	C	6-4	293	24	1	Iowa	FA '09	Cedar Rapids, IA
69	Blake Schlueter	C	6-2	279	24	1	TCU	FA '09	Ganado, TX
72	Sam Baker	OT	6-5	307	25	3	USC	D1b '08	Tustin, CA
73	Harvey Dahl	OG	6-5	305	28	4	Nevado-Reno	FA '07	Fallon, NV
74	Will Svitek	OT	6-6	309	28	5	Stanford	FA '09	Prague, Czech Republic
75	Garrett Reynolds	OT	6-7	317	22	2	North Carolina	D5b '09	Knoxville, TN
76	Quinn Ojinnaka	OG	6-5	299	26	5	Syracuse	D5 '06	Seabrook, MD
77	Tyson Clabo	OT	6-6	331	28	6	Wake Forest	FA '06	Knoxville, TN
79	Mike Johnson	OG	6-6	305	23	R	Alabama	D3b '10	Pensacola, FL
<u>DEFENSIVE LINE (13)</u>									
55	John Abraham	DE	6-4	263	32	11	South Carolina	Tr '06 (NYJ)	Timmons, SC
64	Rajon Henley	DE	6-3	244	22	R	Texas Tech	FA '10	Galveston, TX
71	Kroy Biermann	DE	6-3	260	24	3	Montana	D5b '08	Hardin, MT
90	Lawrence Sidbury	DE	6-3	265	24	2	Richmond	D4 '09	Cheltenham, MD
91	Corey Peters	DT	6-3	295	21	R	Kentucky	D3a '10	Louisville, KY
92	Chauncey Davis	DE	6-2	262	27	6	Florida State	D4 '05	Bartow, FL
93	Thomas Johnson	DT	6-2	304	28	3	Middle Tennessee State	FA '09	Memphis, TN
94	Peria Jerry	DT	6-2	294	25	1	Mississippi	D1 '09	Batesville, MS
95	Jonathan Babineaux	DT	6-2	296	28	6	Iowa	D2 '05	Port Arthur, TX
96	Emmanuel Stephens	DE	6-3	255	23	R	Mississippi	FA '10	Houston, TX
97	Trey Lewis	DT	6-3	316	25	3	Washburn	D6a '07	Topeka, KS
98	Jamaal Anderson	DE	6-6	289	24	4	Arkansas	D1 '07	Little Rock, AR
99	Vance Walker	DT	6-2	307	23	2	Georgia Tech	D7 '09	Fort Mill, SC
<u>LINEBACKERS (9)</u>									
43	Weston Johnson	LB	6-3	233	23	R	Wyoming	FA '10	Wray, CO
45	Bear Woods	LB	6-0	245	23	R	Troy	FA '10	MacClenny, FL
50	Curtis Lofton	LB	6-0	242	23	3	Oklahoma	D2 '08	Kingfisher, OK
51	Robert James	LB	5-11	220	26	1	Arizona State	D5a '08	Glendale, AZ
52	Coy Wire	LB	6-0	225	31	9	Stanford	FA '08	Camp Hill, PA
53	Mike Peterson	LB	6-1	233	33	12	Florida	UFA '09 (Jax)	Gainesville, FL
54	Stephen Nicholas	LB	6-3	230	27	4	South Florida	D4a '07	Jacksonville, FL
56	Sean Weatherspoon	LB	6-2	245	22	R	Missouri	D1 '10	Jasper, TX
59	Spencer Adkins	LB	5-11	242	23	2	Miami (Fla.)	D6 '09	Naples, FL
<u>DEFENSIVE BACKS (15)</u>									
38	Derricks, Gabe	CB	6-3	185	21	R	San Diego	FA '10	Oak Park, CA
20	Brent Grimes	CB	5-10	181	26	3	Shippensburg	FA '07	Philadelphia, PA
21	Christopher Owens	CB	5-9	179	23	2	San Jose State	D3 '09	Los Angeles, CA
22	Chevis Jackson	CB	5-11	193	24	3	LSU	D3a '08	Mobile, AL
23	Dunta Robinson	CB	5-10	182	28	8	South Carolina	FA '10	Athens, GA
24	Dominique Franks	CB	6-0	192	22	R	Oklahoma	D5a '10	Tulsa, OK
25	William Moore	S	6-0	218	25	1	Missouri	D2 '09	Hayti, MO
26	Erik Coleman	S	5-10	207	28	7	Washington State	FA '08	Sacramento, CA
27	Matt Giordano	S	5-11	200	27	6	California	FA '10	Clovis, CA
28	Thomas DeCoud	S	6-2	205	25	3	California	D3c '08	Vallejo, CA
29	Brian Williams	CB	5-11	202	30	9	North Carolina State	FA '09	High Point, NC
36	Rafael Bush	S	5-11	180	22	R	South Carolina State	FA '10	Williston, SC
37	Dominique Daniels	CB	6-2	190	22	R	Nicholls State	FA '10	Gibson, FL
39	Shann Schillinger	S	6-0	202	23	R	Montana	D6 '10	Baker, MT
42	Eric Brock	S	6-0	204	4/4/85	1	Auburn	FA '10	Alexander City, AL
<u>SPECIALISTS (3)</u>									
3	Matt Bryant	K	5-9	200	35	9	Baylor	FA '09	Orange, TX
9	Michael Koenen	P	5-11	198	27	6	Western Washington	FA '05	Ferndale, WA
82	Joe Zelenka	LS	6-3	260	34	12	Wake Forest	FA '09	Cleveland, OH

*Birthdays updated through the month of May

2010 ATLANTA FALCONS UNOFFICIAL DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	12	Michael Jenkins	86	Brian Finneran	14	Eric Weems	11	Troy Bergeron
	17	Brandyn Harvey	16	Tim Buckley				
LT	72	Sam Baker	74	Will Svitek				
LG	63	Justin Blalock	76	Quinn Ojinnaka	69	Blake Schlueter		
C	62	Todd McClure	66	Brett Romberg	61	Joe Hawley	67	Rob Bruggeman
RG	73	Harvey Dahl	79	Mike Johnson	65	Jose Valdez		
RT	77	Tyson Clabo	75	Garrett Reynolds				
TE	88	Tony Gonzalez	87	Justin Peelle	89	Keith Zinger	81	Michael Palmer
	48	Robbie Agnone						
WR	84	Roddy White	83	Harry Douglas	80	Kerry Meier	19	Ryan Wolfe
	15	Andy Strickland						
QB	2	Matt Ryan	8	Chris Redman	4	John Parker Wilson		
RB	33	Michael Turner	32	Jerious Norwood	44	Jason Snelling	35	Antone Smith
	30	Dimitri Nance						
FB	34	Ovie Mughelli	49	Dan Klecko				

DEFENSE

RE	55	John Abraham	90	Lawrence Sidbury	96	Emmanuel Stephens		
DT	95	Jonathan Babineaux	91	Corey Peters	97	Trey Lewis		
DT	94	Peria Jerry	93	Thomas Johnson	99	Vance Walker		
LE	98	Jamaal Anderson	92	Chauncey Davis	71	Kroy Biermann		
OLB	54	Stephen Nicholas	56	Sean Weatherspoon	52	Coy Wire	43	Weston Johnson
MLB	50	Curtis Lofton	59	Spencer Adkins	45	Bear Woods		
OLB	53	Mike Peterson	56	Sean Weatherspoon	51	Robert James		
RCB	23	Dunta Robinson	21	Christopher Owens	24	Dominique Franks	37	Dominique Daniels
LCB	20	Brent Grimes	29	Brian Williams	22	Chevis Jackson	38	Gabe Derrick
S	26	Erik Coleman	25	William Moore	36	Rafael Bush	42	Eric Brock
S	28	Thomas DeCoud	27	Matt Giordano	39	Shann Schillinger		

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Matt Bryant		
KO	9	Michael Koenen	3	Matt Bryant
P	9	Michael Koenen	3	Matt Bryant
KR	14	Eric Weems	24	Dominique Franks
PR	14	Eric Weems	83	Harry Douglas
LS	82	Joe Zelenka		
H	9	Michael Koenen		

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PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Jonathan Babineaux	BAB-in-NO
Troy Bergeron	BÛR-jër-on
Kroy Biermann	Beerman
Thomas DeCoud	DAY-coo
Steve Hauschka	HOWSH-kuh
Michael Koenen	KANE-in
Ovie Mughelli	OH-vee mah-HAY-lee
Jerious Norwood	JAIR-ee-us
Quinn Ojinnaka	O-ja-NAH-ka
Justin Peelle	Peel
Will Svitek	Svee-tech
Joe Zelenka	ze-link-Ah

2010 Atlanta Falcons Transactions

Date	Position	Player	Transaction
January 4	C	BRUGGEMAN, Rob	Signed as Reserve/Future Free Agent
	WR	SWINTON, James	Signed as Reserve/Future Free Agent
	QB	SHOCKLEY, D.J.	Signed as Reserve/Future Free Agent
	WR	STRICKLAND, Andy	Signed as Reserve/Future Free Agent
	C	SCHLUETER, Blake	Signed as Reserve/Future Free Agent
	DE	LUCAS, Maurice	Signed as Reserve/Future Free Agent
	RB	SMITH, Antone	Signed as Reserve/Future Free Agent
	OG	VALDEZ, Jose	Signed as Reserve/Future Free Agent
January 11	FB/DL	KLECKO, Dan	Signed as Reserve/Future Free Agent
February 8	DB	BROCK, Eric	Waived
	DE	LUCAS, Maurice	Waived
March 4	CB	SCHNECK, Mike	Retires
March 6	CB	ROBINSON, Dunta	Signed as a Free Agent
March 8	LS	ZELENKA, Joe	Re-signed
	CB	HOUSTON, Chris	Traded to Detroit in exchange for the Lions' sixth round selection in the 2010 NFL Draft as well as a swap of fifth round choices
March 9	WR	SWINTON, James	Waived
	CB	GRIMES, Brent	Exclusive Rights Signing
March 16	CB	HILL, Tye	Released
	S	GIORDANO, Matt	Signed as a Free Agent
April 15	OT	CLABO, Tyson	Signed Tender Offer
	OG	DAHL, Harvey	Signed Tender Offer
	OG	OJINNAKA, Quinn	Signed Tender Offer
	RB	SNELLING, Jason	Signed Tender Offer
April 19	RB	NORWOOD, Jerious	Re-signed
	P	KOENEN, Michael	Re-signed
	TE	RADER, Jason	Retires
April 22	LB	WEATHERSPOON, Sean	Drafted with Atlanta's first round (19th overall) selection
April 23	DT	PETERS, Corey	Drafted in the third round (83rd overall)
	OL	JOHNSON, Mike	Drafted in the third round (98th overall)
April 24	OL	HAWLEY, Joe	Drafted in the fourth round (117th overall)
	CB	FRANKS, Dominique	Drafted in the fifth round (135th overall)
	WR	MEIER, Kerry	Drafted in the fifth round (165th overall)
	S	SCHILLINGER, Shann	Drafted in the sixth round (171st overall)
April 26	TE	BANKS, Leroy	Signed as a College Free Agent
	WR	BUCKLEY, Tim	Signed as a College Free Agent
	S	BUSH, Rafael	Signed as a College Free Agent
	CB	DANIELS, Dominique	Signed as a College Free Agent
	S	DERRICKS, Gabe	Signed as a College Free Agent
	LS	DRESCHER, Justin	Signed as a College Free Agent

2010 Atlanta Falcons Transactions

Date	Position	Player	Transaction
April 26	WR	HARVEY, Brandyn	Signed as a College Free Agent
	LB	JOHNSON, Weston	Signed as a College Free Agent
	K	LINDHOLM, Garrett	Signed as a College Free Agent
	RB	NANCE, Dimitri	Signed as a College Free Agent
	TE	PALMER, Michael	Signed as a College Free Agent
	TE	PEEK, Colin	Signed as a College Free Agent
	DE	STEPHENS, Emmanuel	Signed as a College Free Agent
	WR	WOLFE, Ryan	Signed as a College Free Agent
	LB	WOODS, Bear	Signed as a College Free Agent
April 29	DT	BRYANT, Trey	Signed as a College Free Agent
	DE	HENLEY, Rajon	Signed as a College Free Agent
May 9	QB	WARD, Eric	Signed as a College Free Agent
	DB	WALKER, Daylan	Signed as a College Free Agent
May 13	TE	BANKS, Leroy	Released
June 8	DT	PETERS, Corey	Signed
June 10	S	SCHILLINGER, Shann	Signed
	QB	WARD, Eric	Waived
June 15	CB	FRANKS, Dominique	Signed
	C	HAWLEY, Joe	Signed
	CB	DANIELS, Dominique	Waived
	LS	DRESCHER, Justin	Waived
	K	LINDHOLM, Garrett	Waived
	DT	BRYANT, Trey	Waived
June 19	OL	JOHNSON, Mike	Signed
July 9	QB	SHOCKLEY, D.J.	Waived
July 31	TE	Robbie Agnone	Signed
	CB	Gabe Derricks	Waived
August 15	CB	DERRICKS, Gabe	Signed
	K	Hauschka, Steve	Waived
August 16	S	BROCK, Eric	Signed
	CB	DANIELS, Dominique	Signed
	CB	WALKER, Daylan	Waived



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CLIPS

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

Publication: cbssports.com

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Date: 5/6/10

Private showing: Ryan's road to QB stardom paved with tape

May 5, 2010

By Pete Prisco

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. -- Wearing a T-shirt, shorts and a visor on his head, Atlanta Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan was sitting behind a desk covered with a laptop and some other video equipment, looking very much like a college student readying for a presentation.

I was here in mid-April at the Falcons team facility, inside one of their meeting rooms, to watch tape with Ryan, the team's third-year quarterback. It was a rare opportunity to peek inside the mind of an NFL quarterback, one admittedly still learning the game.

Watching film, or tape to be precise, is key to the success of any quarterback no matter the level of play. But in the NFL, it's even more so with all the complicated defenses and looks now thrown at quarterbacks, who must decipher it all in split-second decisions or risk throwing an interception that will show up on all the highlight shows.

They'd better know their stuff, and know it well.

"You come into it thinking it's going to be very important studying tape," Ryan said. "It is, but why is it important? How do you take it from here to out on the practice field and to the game? I think that this has become much more important than I thought it would be. I thought it would be very important, but I really think it's even more important than I expected."

Colts quarterback Peyton Manning is legendary in his film study. He has a film room in his basement. Manning loves studying tape, almost needs it like a drug. Others don't put in the time and end up in quarterback bust-land.

Ryan doesn't say he loves it, but he knows it's necessary. He knows it's how a good quarterback gets to be a great one, how great ones get to be legendary.

"Do you like it?" Ryan said, repeating my question. "Yes, and no. I think that at some points, it's good. You feel good about it. But it's a grind, especially late in the year. You really have to not be in here just to run through it. That's the hardest part of the season, late in the season. It's tough for me to stay really locked in on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday watching tape. You're beat up, tired as ----. You just don't feel like being here. You don't feel like watching three, four, five hours of tape. You really have to pinch yourself every five minutes to make sure you stay locked in to what you're doing."

It might be a grind late in the season, but Ryan doesn't take much time away from it afterward. He said he doesn't watch any tape for about a month -- not of himself, not of his opponent. None.

Then as January moves to February, that changes.

"I was itching to get back as soon as they played the Super Bowl," Ryan said. "I'm like 'God, I have to get there. I have to play in this game.' You want to get back to work after that."

There are three types of film study a quarterback can do to make himself better. One is other quarterbacks. A second is your own team, and yourself. And a third is opposing defenses. Ryan has done all three this offseason.

Ryan requested from the Falcons film room tapes of the Texans, Chargers, Packers, Saints and Colts to take home and watch. The team gives him the DVR tapes to use on his laptop at home, which means he can watch at his convenience.

It used to be you had to watch at the facility. Or build a home theater for viewing like Manning. But with DVDs and special laptop programs made specifically for watching tapes, it's now much easier. You don't need to be at the facility all the time.

Ryan can sit at home and pop it into his laptop and spend hours dissecting some of the better passing quarterbacks. If you notice, all five of those teams he requested were successful passing teams in 2009. All five finished in the top seven in the league in passing yards. All the quarterbacks were named to the Pro Bowl.

There were other reasons Ryan watched those teams.

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On the Saints: "Drew [Brees] does such a good job of checking it down. He'll look and look and look and give everything a chance and just about the time the defense will get him, he'll dump it to the flat and pick up 15 yards. I also watched the way they used guys. They used [tight end] Jeremy [Shockey] really well this year I thought. I think Tony [Gonzalez] could fit into some of that with us."

On the Texans: "I think [Falcons receiver] Roddy White is similar to [Texans receiver] Andre Johnson in their body types. They're both physical guys. I wanted to see the ways they used Johnson."

On the Chargers: "I like to watch them play. They really throw it down the field well."

On the Packers: "Aaron [Rodgers] had a great year. I wanted to see what he was doing."

On the Colts: "Peyton is Peyton. You have to watch him."

Ryan keeps a notebook with his tape-watching thoughts.

"I try to look at that tape three or four days a week in the offseason," Ryan said. "Whether I have 25 minutes or I have two hours, I will watch. It just depends."

Ryan also closely scrutinizes himself. He watches a lot of Falcons games, for two reasons. He can self-grade, and he can see what teams do to their different formations. How will they play them? Are they consistent in their approach to what the Falcons do?

On this day, inside the meeting room, we are watching tape of the Falcons' second game with Tampa Bay last season. It came in the final week, with Atlanta winning 20-10 to give them back-to-back winning seasons for the first time in franchise history.

Ryan spends more time with his studies than most fans can imagine. (US Presswire)

It was the end of a tough season for Ryan. He missed two starts with a toe injury that limited him in a couple of other games. He threw 22 touchdown passes and 14 interceptions, but he threw seven touchdown passes and two interceptions in the team's first four games before slowing the rest of the way. His completion percentage was 58.3, down from 61.1 as a rookie in 2008.

"You have to put a microscope on yourself," Ryan said. "You have to be critical, very critical."

With that, it was film-study time. Ryan was in the back of the room, handling the controls, the big projection screen in the front of the room highlighting every play. I was in a chair in front of Ryan, a student learning his tricks of the trade.

He punched up the Tampa Bay icon on the laptop, and up came the Bucs-Falcons game. If we wanted to watch blitzes, or red zone, it is there as well. One click will put all the Bucs' red zone defenses on the screen. For this story, we watch the first half of the game.

Ryan had it tough last season. The three other teams in the NFC South all had new defensive looks and coordinators. Even Tampa Bay, which has been a cover-2 team for most of the past decade or so, veered away from it some early. In 2010, things will be the same, so Ryan is fortunate. He knows what to expect.

"I have six or eight notebooks in two years of just thoughts from throughout the season," Ryan said. "I jot down ideas about a defense or a coordinator. You get a feel for the coordinators as they go from place to place. In Carolina, the guy they have [Ron Meeks] came from Indianapolis and a lot of the Indianapolis stuff he ran came from Tampa. It's all the same stuff."

Ryan runs the action on the screen. We watch the passing plays from the first half, breaking many of them down in detail. Back and forth, back and forth, the action on the screen goes for each pass play.

Runs?

"We can skip those," I told Ryan. "We hate running plays."

He laughed. We skipped them.

The first play was ready to roll. The name on the screen: 12 personnel, zero traffic, short, 335 naked right arrow.

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"We have two tight ends, one back and they're in cover-2, regular cover-2," Ryan said. "I run naked on the first play, looking to hit a bench route. He looks open, but what you read on [Tampa Bay corner] Aqib Talib is that we know if his hips are to the sideline he's so long he can play both of these."

Ryan put the pointer on White and Gonzalez, both running routes to the right side of the formation, White the deeper of the two.

Ryan throws it to Gonzalez, who makes a great catch on the sideline, although the play was called back by penalty.

"It was the first one," Ryan said. "It feels a lot better to get the first one, like your first tee shot on the first tee. You hit that one, you feel a lot better the rest of the day. I almost missed it."

We run through several more passing plays, with Ryan dissecting each of them.

- "What I should have done is come off this guy and dumped it down."
- "We have nothing here, I had to throw it away."
- "See that guy, he jumped the crossing route, taking it away. He does a great job."

For an hour, Ryan breaks down the tape. We isolate a few of the key plays for this story. One happens to be a missed throw to White.

"Talib gets beat," Ryan said as the play unfolds. "That's beat in the NFL, even if it doesn't look like it. It's there. If the ball lands three feet that way, it's a touchdown. All in all, it's not a bad throw. But with that coverage, it has to be more precise."

Talib, who Ryan raves about, tips the ball away at the last second. Incomplete pass.

"If the ball is right here, he might catch it," Ryan said as he points to the spot. "That should have been a touchdown."

Ryan said the key to deciphering the Bucs coverage is no different than with any other team. The keys are the safeties. They usually dictate the coverage, although changes in the NFL game have made it tougher.

It used to be you had strong and free safeties. If the strong safety came down, you had single-high coverage. If he didn't, you had two safeties deep.

"It makes it much more difficult," Ryan said. "In college, I always knew if the safety was down, I'd get single-high. Now they try and fool you. They make it look that way, but it's not the coverage you think. Sometimes, the free plays low and the strong plays high. They're more interchangeable, which makes it tougher."

Later, we get to one of Ryan's favorite plays. It's a 32-yard completion to backup tight end Justin Peelle. Ryan loves the play because it was one called by the coaches that fooled Tampa Bay, mostly because of personnel. The Falcons took Gonzalez out of the game and lined up Peelle at tight end.

"The design of taking Tony out and putting Justin is to get the safety to totally disregard him, and he did," Ryan said. "He has no idea the ball is going that way. They covered him with 58 [linebacker Quincy Black], and he had no idea the ball is going that way. It's a back-shoulder throw. You throw it right over 58's head. He had no chance."

That's just what Ryan did. He fired a shot behind the ear of Black that Peelle pulled in for the big gain.

Later in the game, Ryan would throw a 2-yard touchdown pass to Peelle on the final play of the first half. That score came off a no-huddle offense, Ryan calling plays at the line of scrimmage.

"Why I love the no-huddle is because it keeps it so simple and you get a vanilla defense," Ryan said. "When you know what's coming, it's easy to pick them apart."

With an empty backfield, no backs, Ryan knows exactly what Tampa Bay will do. He pointed to corner Ronde Barber, lined up tight on the defensive formation, to illustrate.

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"When you go empty, they bring the weak dog, the weak-side linebacker," Ryan said. "It's been their check to empty forever. Ronde is their weak-side backer here. We know it's coming from Ronde."

And it does come. And it does several more times in this sequence.

"There's Ronde coming again," Ryan said. "That's what you get from watching the tape."

As the half ends, Ryan asks if that's good enough. It is, but I have a few more questions.

How do you watch tape during the season?

"I try and get three or four games on Monday and another three or four games on Tuesday," he said. "Then I get cutups. On Tuesday, I watch blitz and third-down defense because we work on that on Wednesday. I come in Wednesday morning and watch a game, maybe a little more, of their third-down defense. I look at their blitz and sub-blitz packages, too.

"Wednesday night is a big red zone night. The quarterbacks come in after practice and watch red zone to get a feel for what they do. Thursday night is two-minute offense and no-huddle offense because that's what we work on Fridays. Friday night, I get out of here and we come in Saturday morning and meet with the quarterbacks and wideouts before our normal team meeting starts. I used to fill up the boards in here with stuff, but they told me it was too much. So I've cut it down. We go over some notes and then watch 25 plays from our practices. Then I go over another 15 or so with Tony and Roddy to get a feel for what they like.

"And then at that point, I'm done."

Until Monday, and then it starts all over again. Then it's the lonely quarterback and his laptop and a screen full of moving NFL players, trying to pick up a thing or two that just might decide a game, just might make him great.

"If you don't put in the time, you won't be a good quarterback," Ryan said. "It's a necessity."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/7/10

Mike Smith demanding more from Falcons in year three

May 6, 2010, by Jeff Schultz

This would not be the season for a player to test Mike Smith's patience.

There is a strange dynamic at work in a coach's third season. In year one, everybody is trying to impress the new boss. In year two, there is still a sense of newness and often a motivational carryover from the success or failure of year one.

In year three, there can be a settling effect. Do you know what Mike Smith's great concern is for the Falcons in year three? Settling. Complacency. The team's loss of an edge.

We see this in sports all the time. We saw it with the Falcons under Jim Mora. He commanded their attention in his first season. By his third, the standard had changed. Problems were overlooked. Players will tell you he played favorites. Attention to detail was lost. Excuses increased. Respect from the locker room waned. The team tanked.

"One thing I'm personally trying to avoid is the sense of complacency because we've been here for two years now," Smith said Thursday, before the question was even asked. "If you think you have all the answers, you don't. We can't stay status quo. We have to make some changes."

The Falcons open their third mini-camp under Smith Friday in Flowery Branch. He wanted to implement his plan and establish direction in 2008. He did. The Falcons went 11-5 and made the playoffs. He wanted to maintain success and smooth out the edges in year two. That didn't quite happen. The combination of injuries and a more difficult schedule certainly fed into the 9-7 finish. Nonetheless, Smith wasn't thrilled with the outcome. He took it personally.

"I was very disappointed personally that we didn't make the playoffs," he said. "We don't state our team goals publicly. But making the playoffs obviously was one of them. We didn't reach our goal. That should be a motivating factor for all of us."

Perceptions change quickly in the NFL. Imagine for a moment what would happen if the Falcons missed the playoffs again in 2010. Fair or not, some would start to look at Smith, Thomas Dimitroff and Matt Ryan a little cross-eyed.

Atlanta fans should be familiar with this. There was a time when Mora, Rich McKay and Michael Vick appeared to be long-term franchise cornerstones.

Smith again: "Each Sunday, you get what you earned." And there were too many Sundays last season when there were things that he simply didn't like. They all fed into a lack of consistency.

Young? Yes. Injured? Yes? Satisfactory excuses? No.

Smith is a players' guy. He is liked and respected for his openness and directness. So in this mini-camp and then training camp in July, he is not suddenly going to turn into a screamer. He's not going to hold his breath and turn blue when a player simply wants to have a conversation (Bobby Petrino).

But he is raising the bar.

"I'm not going to change the way I've done my job in the first two years," he said. "I'll demand more simply because we're in the third year and I expect more. You hear me talking about the process all the time. We should be further along in that process in the third year."

The changes will be subtle. "To the average person sitting on the hill," he said, "it won't look very different." Tweak practices. Alter weight room sessions. Change the way information is presented to players. New software will allow coaches to zero in on specific players while watching game tape.

Here's a more natural evolution: That tape will now include Falcons' players more than in the past. When coaches were trying to teach scheme in years one and two, they had to roll tape of the Jacksonville defense and the Pittsburgh offense.

"Guys on defense have been looking at Marcus Stroud and Rashean Mathis for two years," Smith said. "Now we have enough of a Falcons library where they can watch themselves.

"We have to keep them on their toes so the message doesn't get stale. Familiarity can breed mediocrity." We've seen it close-up.

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

Publication: espn.com

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Date: 5/8/10

'The Burner' is back and in top shape

By Pat Yasinskas

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. -- If you saw the Atlanta Falcons in minicamp exactly a year ago and saw them Friday morning, there was one striking difference.

There was less of Michael Turner this time around -- and that's a wonderful thing.

Without ever using the word "fat," Turner pretty much admitted he was precisely that a year ago, and it might have led to his slow start last season and could have been a factor in the ankle injury that popped up just as it seemed he had straightened things out. That threw Atlanta's entire season off track, and even though the Falcons went 9-7 and had back-to-back winning seasons for the first time in franchise history, there was a sense of disappointment because they missed the playoffs.

"I was big in the shoulders and the arms," Turner said. "My face was plump."

"Plump" isn't a stretch. When Turner showed up at minicamp last year, a couple of writers joked that he was looking like he was getting ready to make a switch to fullback. The team never said much about it, but it was obvious Turner had put on considerable weight after rushing for 1,699 yards and 17 touchdowns and carrying the 2008 Falcons to the playoffs in his first season with the team.

"I probably didn't do enough conditioning," Turner said. "I had the Pro Bowl and everything like that and I'd never been through that before. I probably got off track a little bit. I came back a little sluggish last year. I don't want to make excuses for what happened last year, but I just want to make sure that's not an issue."

Turner and coach Mike Smith didn't want to get into specific numbers when talking weight. Turner is listed at 244 pounds on the current Atlanta roster. Team sources said he's very close to that number and plans to play at around 235 to 240 this season. That's a good bit less than Turner was at this time a year ago. Those same sources said Turner was close to 260 at last year's minicamp.

"I don't know that the weight was all that much different last year," Turner said. "But it was a different look of the weight. I'll put it like that. This is a better look for me right now and it's going to get better from here on out. I'm more fit now. I want to be as cut as possible. I'm eating right and staying away from the bad stuff. I'm from Chicago and we've got those greasy pizzas that I love. But I've got that stuff out and I've made it a habit to just eat better all the way around and I've worked very hard at my conditioning."

There's no doubt Turner's worked hard at his conditioning. You can see it in his body and it's obvious he's approaching this season with a strong desire to get back to running the way he did in 2008.

There's a story behind the scenes that people outside of Flowery Branch don't really know. As the Falcons broke after last season, Smith essentially banned the players from coming to the facility for a month. The coach told the players to just rest up and get away from football.

On the very first day that players were allowed back into the workout room, Turner was the first guy there. Other players straggled in before the official opening of the team's conditioning program, but Turner hasn't stopped.

During the offseason, the Falcons show up for conditioning four days a week. Turner's been showing up five days a week.

"Michael's in better shape than he was at this point a year ago," Smith said. "I don't know if conditioning had anything to do with his injury or not and he had his weight where we wanted it at the start of the season. He just got beyond in his schedule last year because of the Pro Bowl and he had to work hard to catch up. We talked some about conditioning this year, but it wasn't like I had to order him to focus on it. He already was planning on doing it. He got an earlier start on it this year and it's definitely paid dividends. He looked great out there this morning and I saw him making cuts and looking as sharp as he ever has."

That's great news throughout Flowery Branch and all of Atlanta. There were a lot of reasons the Falcons fell short of the playoffs last season, but the biggest one of all was probably the fact that Turner wasn't healthy.

Turner missed five full games and wasn't completely healthy for three or four more. His numbers dipped to 871 rushing yards and 10 touchdowns on 178 carries. Backups Jerious Norwood and Jason Snelling were decent as fill-ins, but the Falcons didn't have the consistency in their running game that they did in 2008. That took a toll on the rest of the offense and the defense probably spent more time on the field than the coaches would have liked.

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"Oh, man, you don't know how great it was to see him back out there today," quarterback Matt Ryan said. "We just need to keep him healthy because he makes such a big difference. I know Mike's worked really hard this offseason and has done a great job. It's a personal thing for him. He feels like he's done things better this year. He looks good. He's on top of his flexibility. He's doing all the things he needs to do to be able to play all 16. If he can play all 16, we're going to be in good shape."

Keeping Turner on the field for 16 games is a goal for the Falcons because it means they'll probably be in contention for a playoff spot. But there are other numbers the Falcons want to keep an eye on with Turner and those don't involve his weight or the number of games he plays.

Even before last season started, the Falcons had made it clear they didn't want Turner carrying anywhere near the 376 times he did in 2008. The Falcons talked a lot about getting Snelling and Norwood more involved and how last year's arrival of tight end Tony Gonzalez could lessen Turner's carry total a little. But we never truly got to see that formula play out last season.

Turner started slowly, the Falcons lost receiver Harry Douglas to injury and the offense never really got into the rhythm the coaches imagined. The coaches are seeing a healthy Turner now and they're imagining big things for the upcoming season.

"We, as a coaching staff, have to do a better job of managing his touches," Smith said. "We're not going to go into a game saying he's only going to get X amount of carries, but we do have to set some parameters because of the long season."

Keeping Turner healthy and not overworking him is the plan. If the Falcons can find that balance, they just might find themselves back in the playoffs. In Turner's mind, they're well on the way.

"I wanted to cut weight as much as possible before we even got to this minicamp," Turner said. "I feel like I've got to carry the load this year. I want to be out there for the full 16. I want to be in game shape as fast as possible. "We've just got to keep everybody healthy this year and we'll have a chance to do something special."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

Publication: ajc.com

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Date: 5/8/10

Robinson glides through his first practice with the Falcons

By D. Orlando Ledbetter

FLOWERY BRANCH -- Cornerback Dunta Robinson, the Falcons' major offseason acquisition, effortlessly glided through his first practice Friday.

He lined up on the left side of the secondary and delivered the big plays and tight coverage the team envisioned when they signed him to a six-year, \$57.5 million free-agent contract.

Linebacker Mike Peterson tipped one pass that fluttered into Robinson's waiting hands. He grabbed it and raced for a touchdown.

Robinson and the revamped secondary looked just fine. They ended up with five interceptions.

"There were a couple of mental errors," Robinson said. "I'm still trying to learn the new defense. But that's a part of it. I ran around and felt good, so I would say for a first practice that it was a good overall practice for me."

The Falcons' defense finished 28th in the NFL against the pass (242.1 yards per game) last season. Robinson was signed to help solidify the cornerback position.

Brent Grimes and Christopher Owens alternated with the first team at right cornerback opposite Robinson.

In addition to his skills, the Falcons hope that Robinson can infuse some swagger and confidence into the unit. Before the secondary defended the wide receivers in one-on-one drills, he attempted to set the tone and step into the leadership role.

The cornerbacks gathered in a huddle.

"I said, 'this is the first step for us to becoming the best secondary in the NFL,'" Robinson said. "'We have to go out there like we can do it. We [must] have that belief in ourselves.' That's the tone that we are trying to set."

From 28th to first?

"Not one individual in the secondary, but be the best secondary in the NFL," Robinson said.

While Robinson is expected to add brashness and swagger to the secondary, he's not a loud player in practice. In contrast, former Falcons cornerback DeAngelo Hall was loud and seemed to start a fight with Adam Jennings every day in order to fire up himself.

For Robinson, he has a quiet confidence and business-like approach to practice. The swagger part of playing cornerback apparently comes naturally to the Athens native.

"I just go out there and do the things I'm supposed to do and play the way I'm supposed to play," Robinson said. "There's no added pressure because, that's just the way I play football."

Robinson's transition to the Falcons has been smooth. He took part in the six-week offseason conditioning program and has met all of his new teammates.

During conditioning, he had a functional-movement test, which revealed that his body was not in balance.

"I had an [ACL] injury, and [the test] showed that my left side was a lot more stable than the right side," Robinson said. "So that was kind of what I worked on the entire six weeks. I took the test on Monday, and everything is balanced now."

Falcons coach Mike Smith noticed that Robinson made an immediate impact at practice.

"One of the things that I'm excited about is that he's a passionate, energetic player who plays the game the way it's supposed to be played," Smith said. "He'll step into that secondary and bring a lot of positive energy to the group back there."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

Publication: AJC.com

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Date: 5/10/10

Falcons Q&A: Arthur Blank pleased with offseason moves D. Orlando Ledbetter

FLOWERY BRANCH – Falcons owner Arthur Blank, fresh from his wedding anniversary trip to Paris, took in the final practice of minicamp on Sunday.

Sporting a red Tommy Hilfiger sweater vest, black shirt and gray slacks, Blank, near the end of practice, talked about the team's offseason moves, the draft, season ticket sales and the collective bargaining negotiations. Below is the Q & A.

Q: Are you pleased with how your offseason has played out?

A: It started with free agency, we're excited to have Dunta Robinson here. He looks like a rookie the way he's running around and is providing up speed, youth, experience and leadership that we expected. We had another terrific draft. It's great to have Spoon here and Corey (Peters) here and the other players we drafted and the college free agents.

I'm excited about where we are as an organization. Thomas and Smitty have worked hard for the third season together. They have put together an outstanding group of young men. Now we have to develop them over the next number of months. I look forward to playing our games in September and being here for training camp in July. I feel good but probably so does other owner in the league right now. That's the beauty of the NFL. Probably every owner from now until September feels like they are going to have a winning season and be in the playoffs.

I read the column that Matt (Ryan) did with your associate Mark Bradley. I think he's right. We are all kind of shooting higher than we did last year. I've been pretty public that I was excited about back to back winning seasons, but now I'm excited about rings. We need to focus on our division. Win our division, then go on from there and get into the playoffs and go as deep as we can.

Q: You've met Sean (Weatherspoon) on the pre-draft tour. What are your impressions now that you see him in a Falcons uniform?

A: He looks great. He's enthusiastic to be here and we're enthusiastic to have him. I think as you've heard from Thomas and Smitty that we had a number of scenarios develop over the three days of the draft and pretty much hit on all of the key positions and players that we were anxious to see in our uniform. We are excited they are here. They are all here and look like we expected them to look. You would be disappointed if they didn't. We are in a good place. The guys have had wonderful weather for three days to work in.

Q: There seemed to be an emphasis on drafting guys who graduated from college and guys who did

A: Today's game, as time goes on, is getting more and more sophisticated. Not just the size of the playbook, but the complexity of the playbook with the schemes, the number of coaches and the complexity of the way they are coaching today. The players' ability to understand what's in front of them and react within a quarter of a second. Frankly, to play in the NFL today you have to be smart. It's not just being football smart. You have to be smart. We look for players that represent the organization well both on the field and off the field. That's always been an important part of my philosophy and an important part about what this franchise is about. It's about winning on the field and it's about winning off the field as well. I'm proud of our players on both accounts.

Q: What's ahead for the league in collective bargaining? Has it impacted the decisions that you might have made this offseason?

A: No, not really. We had a budget that we established. We had a plan and we worked our plan. We feel good about our investment in our players. I know both the union and the league are working hard on getting a deal done. I'm certainly optimistic that we'll be playing football in 2011. It's not going to happen automatically. It's not going to be an easy process. But it's a process that you have to go through it. I think the union, the league and ownership are committed to

Q: It's been a strange week in the economy?

A: We were over in Paris on our anniversary trip. We followed the whole situation over there in terms of what was happening in Greece. When you are in Europe you feel more closely to it. I think the book that Thomas Friedman wrote some years ago, "The world is flat" is true. What happens anywhere else in the world affects us. What happens here, including this oil spill off the coast, affects oil prices and everything throughout the world. This world is a community.

Q: Given the economy, how are your season tickets going coming off of those back to back winning seasons?

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A: They have responded well. But having said that, we still have tickets to sell. . . We're excited about where we are. We've lead the league in season ticket sales the last two years. This year we hope to be up there as well. We are doing well on the premium side, club seats and suites. There's still some work there to do. Atlanta has always supported our team. They've been great. We've tried to do the right things for the franchise to earn the fans' respect. I tell our players repeatedly that without our fans and sponsors, we'd have 22 young men playing sandlot football. That's it. We are about our fans. We are about our sponsors. We are about the people who come to the games. We are about people that watch our games on TV and make sure that our ratings are high. That's really important for the league and it's important for us.

Q: How pleasing is it to have the players out volunteering in the community?

A: It's great. With our players we had over 750 hours of player appearances this last year. We lead the NFL that way. We have over 200 appearances by our cheerleaders last year. We lead the league in that. Well, what does that mean. . . We don't make them, do these things. It's not required. It's not in their contracts. . . but if you have the right kind of individuals on the team in terms of performance and winning games, but it also means that they do care about the community. They understand that they are role models and that they need to perform that way. The time they spend, whether if its in nursing homes, hospitals or schools, in any situation, giving back and creating the right kind of situation for folks that are less advantaged is very important to me personally and to our organization. It's a great credit to them that they do it during their limited time off."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

Publication: ESPN.com

Section/# of Pages: Sports/1 of 2

Date: 5/11/10

Ryan, Falcons ready for next step

By Pat Yasinskas

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. -- Go ahead and say Matt Ryan had a "sophomore slump" last season. Pull out all the numbers you want (some are better and some worse than his rookie year) or point to the fact the Falcons did not make the playoffs.

Go ahead, say Ryan took a step back after leading the Atlanta Falcons to a surprise playoff run as a rookie. Do it.

You'll be wrong. There was no "slump." Yeah, there were some ups and downs. But when I look back at Ryan's second season, I see a guy who made progress. In fact, I see a guy who probably graduated to the next level. You might not realize it yet, but you will.

What Ryan did in the last three games went largely unnoticed as the Falcons fell from the playoff picture. But in those three games Ryan established himself as the unquestioned leader of the team and laid the groundwork for a season in which the Falcons could be the NFC South's biggest challenger to the New Orleans Saints.

"In terms of sophomore slump, I don't believe that at all," coach Mike Smith said. "We didn't get the wins that we wanted, but I thought Matt made progress. We gave him more in terms of what we asked him to do and I thought he operated the offense very effectively. We'll continue to expand that in Year 3."

Before we get to Year 3, let's finish up Year 2 because what happened at the end might be a whole lot more significant than you realize. Ryan suffered a toe injury early in a Nov. 29 game against Tampa Bay. The team doctors told Smith that Ryan wouldn't be able to play for six to eight weeks. In other words, his season should have been over and, at that point, you might have been able to make a strong case for the "sophomore slump."

With backup Chris Redman playing, the Falcons lost their next two games. But a strange thing happened after that, and it might turn out to be more impressive than anything Ryan did as a rookie. Almost miraculously, Ryan's toe got healthy enough that he was able to play the last three games.

He still was wobbly and his numbers weren't anything special. But the important thing is that Ryan's return allowed the Falcons to win their final three games and turn a star-crossed season (there were lots of injuries besides the one to Ryan) into something of a success. At 9-7, the Falcons didn't make the playoffs, but they finished with back-to-back winning seasons for the first time in franchise history.

That means the Falcons aren't at some sort of starting point as they head into the 2010 season. They've already started their ascent and they've got something really solid to build upon.

"I think I definitely made strides from Year 1 to Year 2," Ryan said. "I think the biggest thing is being consistent. I've got to continue to get better at that. The biggest key is to be more consistent, especially on first and second down. I think there's room for improvement for myself, for our offense and for our team on first and second down to be more productive. That's going to be the focus of this offseason."

You hear things like that from quarterbacks all around the league at this point of the year. But it's a little different with Ryan and the Falcons. In their case, the consistency actually might be easier done than said. Ryan and the Falcons don't like to use injuries as excuses, so I'll do it for them.

Atlanta's offense never really had a chance to get off the ground last year. The Falcons lost receiver Harry Douglas to injury early in training camp. Running back Michael Turner struggled early in the season and, just when he started getting on track, he suffered an ankle injury that hobbled him for about half the season. Backup Jerious Norwood also was banged up and the Falcons suffered several injuries across the offensive line.

Turner is healthy now and appeared to be in much better physical condition at minicamp than he was a year ago. Douglas is still rehabbing, but should be ready to go by training camp. The offensive linemen are healthy and the draft brought some depth in that department.

The return of a healthy Harry Douglas should provide a boost to the Falcons' offense. "Obviously, our game was changed a lot without Michael and even some of our offensive linemen having injuries," general manager Thomas Dimitroff said. "Harry Douglas was going to be a very important producer for us almost side-by-side with what we thought was going to happen with Tony Gonzalez underneath

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and then the multi-move routes that Harry Douglas was going to run, we had some high expectations from that offense. We were plagued by injuries from the outset, but I'm proud of how that whole locker room hung in there."

Long story short, the Falcons never really got to run their offense in 2009. They're not going into intricate details of what's in their mind for 2010, but you get a sense there will be some tweaks made to play to Ryan's strengths. After all, Ryan is "the franchise" and that fact was hammered home a few weeks ago when he had dinner with owner Arthur Blank. It was nothing extraordinary -- Blank generally meets with his key players in the offseason. The owner makes it a point to stay out of the football side of things, but he likes to have a relationship with his players and talk about the big picture for the franchise.

"He just shared some of his experiences of dealing with different things and expressed to me what his vision for me is within the organization," Ryan said. "I don't think it's all that much different from the way I've approached it the first two years. But, with that said, maybe it's a bigger role. It was a great conversation and something that I was excited to hear. Anytime that you have the full support of the owner, that feels really good. I appreciate his words and the relationship we have."

Blank talked a little about leadership. That's never been a problem with Ryan. The owner didn't tell the quarterback he needs to be more vocal or anything like that. He just threw out some thoughts on the next step for Ryan and the Falcons.

"I think it just comes down to I have to have a little bit better perspective of what I need to do on the field and be comfortable with the things I need to be comfortable with in terms of the plays we run and things like that," Ryan said. "Along with the coaching staff, I've got a better feel for that after two seasons of having been together. We were better in Season 2, at least in my opinion, than we were in Season 1. But we need to be more consistent in Season 3 than we were in 2 and 1. If we do that, we're going to be a much better football team.'

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/11/10

Weatherspoon hopes to rule the jungle one day

By D. Orlando Ledbetter

FLOWERY BRANCH – One day, rookie linebacker Sean Weatherspoon would not mind being the king of the jungle.

But for now, he's just fine with linebacker Mike Peterson dubbing him the "Baby Lion."

"That came from Daddy Lion, the guy with the dark visor and the mane," Weatherspoon said Sunday after going through his first five practices with the Falcons. "I guess he's Mufasa and I'm Simba."

Channeling "The Lion King," the nickname seem to fit the team's first-round pick, who worked out at both weakside and strongside outside linebacker positions.

"The fans were asking me to sign Baby Lion and stuff like that," Weatherspoon said. "It's something that is fun and I like it."

The Falcons threw a lot of defensive information at Weatherspoon. Coach Mike Smith said that both outside linebacker positions are interchangeable in the team's scheme.

"I thought Sean did a very nice job," Smith said.

Understandably, Weatherspoon's head was still spinning from the fast pace of minicamp. During the position group meetings, linebackers coach Glenn Pires would tell Weatherspoon if he was playing the weakside in the morning or the strongside in the afternoon.

"It was just up to me to adjust and be able to play both sides," Weatherspoon said. "It's been good so far because the veterans have done a good job of talking to me. Without those guys out there talking to me, it would be a little bit different."

The Falcons like to cross-train their players at multiple positions.

"That even makes it a little tougher for him to learn both," Smith said. "But in the long run, we know that it's going to pay off."

Things finally started to slow down for Weatherspoon by the fourth practice on Saturday afternoon, when he made a couple of nice deflections while covering running back Dimitri Nance.

In the fifth practice, he made a show-stopping play that draw cheers from the defensive side. The Falcons were in a cover-2 zone and Weatherspoon settled into his drop right on time with the quarterback, who had settled to throw. Making the proper read, Weatherspoon picked up the receiver who was flashing across his zone.

"It would have been a nice little play," Weatherspoon said. "I couldn't have picked it, but it would have been a nice collision."

Beyond that, he heard the cheers of his new teammates.

"It definitely made me feel good because I ended on a positive note," Weatherspoon said. "The defense just did a great job. We communicated together and got off the field. That's what it's all about."

Throughout the three-day camp, Weatherspoon seemed to be digesting the information and did not appear overloaded.

"Spoon has been looking good," middle linebacker Curtis Lofton said. "He's a smart guy. As a rookie coming in, I really feel like he's starting to get a grasp on things."

The Falcons have made it a point to get their first-round picks in training camp on time the last two seasons. Negotiations with Weatherspoon haven't started, but he doesn't want to even think about missing some practice time.

Philadelphia's Jeremy Maclin, drafted as Weatherspoon was with the 19th selection, signed a five-year deal worth \$15.5 million.

"Mr. (Nick) Polk [Falcons' director of football administration] talked to me about it and the goal is to get in as quickly as possible," Weatherspoon said. "I really want to come out here and be on point. I want to have the best opportunity to go out there and showcase."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/13/10

Eco-athlete, Atlanta Falcon Ovie Mughelli touts Tybee Falcons fullback helps spread island's green message By Mary Landers

Atlanta Falcons' fullback and self-described eco-athlete Ovie Mughelli is helping Tybee tackle green issues.

"It's not rocket science; take ownership of this island and this environment," said Mughelli, who spoke at a scenic dock on the Back River.

Mughelli's green credentials spring from his work with his Ovie Mughelli Foundation, whose motto is "our future is green." The foundation provides football training camps to underprivileged kids in Charleston and Atlanta. But football's just the hook. Once the kids are in camp, Mughelli gives them a dose of eco-education with talks and activities such as a recycling exercise set up in the middle of a gridiron.

"They're underprivileged, so they think the environment is the least of their problems," Mughelli said. "But they're the ones with landfills in their backyards."

His teammates have been a little surprised by his foundation's mission, thinking he'd have to be a "hippie or a tree hugger" to make the environment his cause.

Not so, he said.

"You don't have to be perfect," he said. "I can't bike everywhere. You crawl before you walk."

But what does his foundation have to do with Tybee specifically?
Not a lot.

He lent his celebrity to Wednesday's event at the request of Stacey Jarrell, owner of Tybee's Oceanfront Cottage Rentals. Jarrell, whose company manages 93 properties, and who last year bought the chapel constructed on Tybee for the Miley Cyrus film "The Last Song," is trying to re-brand Tybee as a healthy place to live and visit. She'll be providing guests with tips on greening their stay this summer.

She's planning a fundraiser for Mughelli's foundation for the fall.

Although Mughelli grew up in Charleston and lives in Atlanta he hadn't visited Tybee until this week.

He vowed to come back.

"I was on a boat yesterday, and I saw dolphins coming up," he said. "I was like, man, I could do this weeks on end."

That's fine with Tybee council member Paul Wolff, who's so green he just installed solar panels on his roof.

"I'm glad he's helping Tybee get the message across that we need to engage visitors as well as residents in protecting the environment on which our entire lifestyle depends," he said.

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/14/10

Q&A: Thomas DeCoud hopes to follow-up big season by D. Orlando Ledbetter

FLOWERY BRANCH – Free safety Thomas DeCoud had a breakthrough season in 2009.

He landed the starting free safety spot and was named to USA Today's All-Joe team. He finished fourth on the team in tackles with 113 (73 solo, 40 assists), he was second on the team with three picks and he had two sacks, according to the coach's stats after film review.

We caught up with DeCoud right after he took the picture with the lovely lady above.

Below is the Q&A:

Q: What's been your offseason focus?

A: Just trying to make myself better athletically. I'm trying to keep getting better and not plateau as an athlete. I'm learning everybody's position on the defense. Being able to get a d-lineman lined up or a corner if I need to. I just want to be that field general. That's what I want to get better at.

Q: Was it an honor to be named to USA Today's All-Joe team?

A: It was good to be recognized. I felt like I played well last season. It's always good to be recognized and have your name called out and put on a team, somewhat of an all-star team.

Q: What's your ceiling?

A: I just want to be a field general. I want to learn our system in and out. . . like I did last year. I just need to build on the things I did well last year and make the things I didn't do as well better.

Q: How has the unit adjusted to the new secondary coach, Tim Lewis?

A: Really well. He's a teacher. Me, personally, I learn on the board and in practice. He's a guy who likes to teach on the board and in practice. He's making things simpler and a lot easier for guys to comprehend and get a hold of.

Q: The unit finished 28th against the pass. What are some of things that you all can do to improve

A: Just knowing our scheme. Once we know our scheme, we can match things . . . stop wasting time trying to figure out what's going on. We can match routes a lot faster and get our hands on more balls.

Q: Is being competitive with the Super Bowl champs the team's number one goal?

A: We go against the Saints every year. They are a good team. They are pretty much the litmus test for the NFC South. If we play well against them, we feel like we can play well against any team in this league.

Q: What are some of the offseason things you've done away from football that have been pleasurable or something you've been looking forward to do?

A: I haven't been away too much this offseason. I went back to California and worked out the whole month of February. I took a couple of weeks off then got right back on the grind. You can't get too lax in the offseason.

Q: It doesn't sound like there's too much fun in there?

A: I kick it, but mostly I'm a home body. I'll go out every once in a while. But I stay at home and play the video games. I'm more a home body type dude.

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/18/10

Mike Smith, Falcons working miracle

By Pat Yasinskas

Just got off the phone with Atlanta Falcons coach Mike Smith and, surprisingly, the topic of football never came up.

There was a good reason for that. Smith's got something more important on his plate tonight. He's hosting his second annual Huddle Up For Miracles dinner at an Atlanta restaurant in a little less than an hour.

Last year's event raised nearly \$200,000 for Children's Miracle Network, which benefits Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. This year's proceeds will benefit Children's Comprehensive Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit.

Smith will recognize Miracle Child Marcus Nickell as about 40 Atlanta players and coaches serve as waiters.

"Marcus was involved in a very severe skateboard accident in 2008," Smith said. "Marcus has worked very hard at rehabilitation and made good progress. He still faces a tough battle, but we want to recognize what he's accomplished and how the rehabilitation unit has helped him."

Smith was involved in the Children's Miracle Network when he was an assistant with the Jacksonville Jaguars. When he came to Atlanta, he tied that in with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta because the Falcons and owner Arthur Blank already were active with the organization.

"This is something that's very near and dear to my heart and the hearts of Mr. Blank and his family," Smith said.

At last year's dinner, linebacker Stephen Nicholas spoke about his son, Stephen Jr., who had a successful heart transplant and the proceeds from that event went to the cardiac department of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/22/10

Matt Bryant starts fresh in Atlanta

By Pat Yasinskas

After regaining his kicking stroke in the UFL last season, Matt Bryant found a home with the Falcons. FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. -- He kicked them to victory at a time when his heart was broken. In return, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers kicked Matt Bryant to the curb.

He's been through more tragedy and a very humbling experience since that 2008 weekend when he buried his infant son and booted the Buccaneers to victory. But if you thought all those off-field sorrows were going to relegate Bryant to a spot in the minor leagues and send him on a path out of football, think again.

Bryant, 34, is back in the NFL, back in the NFC South and doing just fine. He's the kicker for the Atlanta Falcons and, in some ways, he's stronger now than he was before the sudden death of his infant son, Tryson, and the slow and painful death of his father.

"There's never a day that goes by that I don't think about my son and now my dad," Bryant said after a recent workout with the Falcons. "That just never goes away. It doesn't change and it probably never will. That's all right because that's my life. But when I step out on the field, no matter what has happened off the field, I go out there with the mentality of trying to be the best."

That's Bryant's mindset these days and he's in a good spot. The Falcons have some younger kickers on the roster, but all indications are they'll go with Bryant as long as he kicks well in training camp and the preseason.

"Right now, Matt Bryant is our kicker, but we have a very competitive situation," Atlanta coach Mike Smith said. "Matt's advantage is he has done it in this league. He's had some tough times personally, but he's a very strong man."

Probably stronger than any of us realize. After going undrafted out of Baylor, Bryant had to scratch and claw his way to the NFL. He worked in a pawn shop and as a personal trainer for several years before catching on with the New York Giants in 2002. He bounced around with the Colts and Dolphins, too, before finally finding what seemed like a home in Tampa Bay in 2005.

[+] EnlargeAP Photo/Reinhold Matay

Matt Bryant blew a kiss as a tribute to his son during a game against the Packers on Sept. 28, 2008. That's where Bryant thrived for four seasons. In 2006, he made a game-winning 62-yard field goal and the city declared a day in Bryant's honor. He firmly grabbed the city's heart in September 2008, when just days after his infant son, Tryson, died in his sleep, Bryant kicked a game-winning field goal.

But a strange thing happened when coach Jon Gruden was fired after the 2008 season. Even though Bryant temporarily survived the purge of veterans such as Derrick Brooks that started soon after coach Raheem Morris and general manager Mark Dominik took over, it quickly became obvious he also was on the way out.

The Bucs spent \$2.4 million (more than double Bryant's salary) to bring in kicker Mike Nugent.

"That was their guy," Bryant said. "It was very clear and obvious. I'd love to tell you the whole story and if I do it would actually accomplish something. If I thought it would do any good, I would. But it would probably actually hurt me. Let's just say it was a very frustrating situation that could have been easily resolved. All the way from the top, from the owners to the GM, it was a frustrating situation that I wish I never had to have been a part of it. My family and I loved Tampa and the fans were absolutely great. But there are some situations you can't pick and choose."

The Bucs kept Bryant through training camp as he dealt with a hamstring injury. He said he was healthy enough to kick by the final preseason game, but the Bucs didn't let him. The Bucs never really have commented on Bryant's departure, only saying they brought in Nugent for competition. But the Bucs later released Nugent who struggled with consistency. The Bucs released Bryant in the final cut and the perception around the league was he still had hamstring issues.

He got a tryout in Cleveland last September.

"It was exactly a year from the day Tryson had passed," Bryant said. "Going into it, I didn't feel very good and I hadn't kicked with a snapper and a holder in two months. I didn't have a great workout."

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Date: 5/22/10

That left Bryant with only one option -- taking a big step back from the NFL. He signed a contract with the Orlando Tuskers of the United Football League. That's where Bryant's kicking stroke firmly returned and the Falcons kept an eye on him from a distance. With veteran Jason Elam struggling with accuracy, the Falcons signed Bryant on Dec. 1, 2009.

"Going to the UFL was good," Bryant said. "The pay was considerably less, but it still was football. It was good football. Everybody was there for their own reasons. I want to publicly thank them for letting me come into their league."

Bryant finished the season with Atlanta, but not without another tragedy. After a lengthy battle with ALS, Bryant's father passed away late last season. Bryant had another funeral to attend, but didn't miss any game time.

Painful as it may be, Bryant is trying to put distance on the tragedies. He's spent much of his offseason in Atlanta and his family recently moved into the area. Wife Melissa's been busy getting the children involved in sports and school and Bryant's been focusing on football.

They once thought they had a long-term home in Tampa. That's what they now are trying to build in Atlanta.

"It's been a tough couple of years," Bryant said. "I've had some big losses and I've been very humbled professionally. But I'm coming in here and starting over. I'm approaching it with the mindset of going out there every day and doing my best and letting whatever happens happen."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

Publication: FoxSportsSouth.com

Section/# of Pages: Sports/1 of 2

Date: 5/26/10

A Perfect Fit

By John Manasso
For FoxSportsSouth.com

The fit could not have been any better.

The Atlanta Falcons ranked 28th in the NFL against the pass in 2009 and as much as head coach Mike Smith went through great pains to stress that defense is a team effort throughout a 9-7 non-playoff campaign, the Falcons' actions spoke louder than words when the unrestricted free agency market opened.

From Dunta Robinson's perspective, his six-year marriage with the Houston Texans had come to an end even before the '09 season, owing to a public contract dispute. What better place to land than less than an hour's drive from his hometown of Athens, Ga.?

So five days into the start of free agency, the Falcons announced the signing of Robinson, the top cornerback available in the 2010 market, for a reported six years and \$57 million.

With Robinson slotted in at one cornerback position and veteran Brian Williams, coming off ACL surgery, likely in the nickel spot, the Falcons' defensive backfield will be deeper, more talented and more experienced in a unit that represented their greatest weakness in 2009.

"I think the defensive back group as a whole is going to be the most-watched this offseason," Smith said on Wednesday, the second day of Falcons' Offseason Team Activities and their first open to the media. "I think it's going to be very, very competitive. We're certainly hoping Brian can come back from his surgery. He's working very hard. But I think you're going to have some very experienced players in those two guys [Robinson and Williams] and I think they can be mentors to some of the younger guys."

It's not just Robinson who is new. The Falcons also hired Tim Lewis as their secondary coach to replace grandfatherly hall of famer Emmett Thomas. In talking to Lewis, one senses that he will bring a more technical, hands-on approach.

Lewis said he thinks that one player – Robinson – can make "tons" of difference to a defense. Whereas last year the pressure sat squarely on the Falcons' defensive front to pressure the quarterback – and they struggled in that area, namely in the person of end John Abraham, whose production fell dramatically from 16.5 sacks in '08 to 5.5 last year – Lewis hopes to turn that equation around. That is, improved secondary play will translate into more sacks.

"Let's hope that tighter coverage means more sacks and that more sacks means more wins," Lewis said. "So more pressure on the quarterback, it goes hand in hand. If we're closer, Abraham gets a chance to do what he does."

Lewis understands that he has joined the Falcons staff at an opportune time, offering that "better players always make better coaches." And so he lavished praise on Robinson. He especially seems to value Robinson's toughness, as he mentioned it twice in describing the 28-year-old.

"Athleticism, toughness, experience," Lewis said of Robinson's assets. "The things that I've seen over the years on videotape – I remember grading him when he came out and I told him so; I had him ranked a first-round pick and clearly he was a first-rounder -- he's got speed and quickness and all the things you want at that position. He's got ball skills. He's tough, he's physical. He's a solid professional corner and I'm looking forward into watching him grow into one of the elite corners."

In addition to all of that, the 5-foot-10 Robinson brings a measure of size. The Falcons cornerbacks last year were mostly under 5-10 except for Williams, who was lost for the season in the Falcons' fifth game – after which the team went a conspicuous 5-6.

Robinson is no effete corner. He is not one of those corners who fancies himself a high-strung thoroughbred who doesn't want to mix it up. He embraces the concept that he brings a safety's mentality to his position.

"Oh, yeah, I love to come up and hit," said Robinson, who averaged 86 tackles in his first three seasons but had only 64 last season – a result, Lewis observed, of teams' throwing away from him. "And I think that's part of the game. I hear a lot of guys say, 'I'm a cover corner.' I don't want that beside my name. I want 'complete corner' beside my name.

"I'm a guy that can play press [coverage], a guy that can play shuffle, a guy that can back-pedal. That's why I'm out here working so hard to get those things right... I think it's rare in this league that you get a guy who can do every single thing and I'm trying to work my way into that."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Section/# of Pages: Sports/2 of 2

Date: 5/26/10

For now, the purpose of these OTAs, as far as Robinson is concerned, is to integrate him into the Falcons' system and teach him its techniques, specifically the use of back-pedaling as opposed to the press coverage and shuffling techniques that Houston employed. Lewis said because of that, Robinson looks like a rookie at times in some of the drills the Falcons run.

And even though Robinson has excelled in the league using other techniques, the Falcons system requires that he use the new ones. This is the NFL, after all.

"The defense is a demanding defense and it requires particular footwork, leverage angles, technique, you know, to fit the scheme," Lewis said. "Fortunately, he has the ability to execute all of those techniques and the intelligence to know when to execute them and how to. And he's not a stubborn kid. He's not one of those kids who will say, 'I don't know how to do it that way, I'm not doing it.'"

Lewis first learned of Robinson's open-mindedness when they attended an Atlanta Hawks-Golden State Warriors game at Philips Arena on March 5.

"And I understand it," Robinson said. "I'm not one of those kinds of guys who comes into a system and says, 'I'm not doing what you ask.' I'm trying to learn the way they do things and I think that's how you fit into the system. You got to believe in the system. Even though it's not what you're used to doing, if you come out here and keep working and keep believing in the system eventually, it's going to pay off.

"I'm definitely not one of those guys who says, 'Coach, this is my way or no way.' I'm definitely a team player and definitely trying to learn how they do things around here."

He's learning and he said he's happy to be in a place where he's wanted. After holding out until early September with Houston last year, he eventually signed a one-year deal for \$9.957 million, but he wasn't pleased. In the team's season opener, he wrote the words, "Pay Me Rick" on his shoes – a message to Titans general manager Rick Smith. Robinson admits that was an "outrageous" stunt and about as far as he goes in terms of any antics.

For now, he's living with his parents at the lake house he bought them in Oconee County, just west of Athens, until he finds something closer to the Falcons' Flowery Branch headquarters. He feels at home seeing his parents more, as well as friends that he grew up with.

Lewis sees him as a charismatic leader in meetings – valuable to young defensive backs Christopher Owens, Brent Grimes, Chevis Jackson and Thomas DeCoud – as well as a vocal leader on the field.

"My mindset is very great right now," Robinson said, thanking, in order, the team's general manager, owner, head coach and position coach. "I feel like I'm in a place where they want me. They gave me an opportunity, so my thing is to not let Mr. [Thomas] Dimitroff down, Mr. [Arthur] Blank down, Coach Smith down, Coach Lewis down. I just want to come here and be a great football player."

And maybe improve that defense from 28th against the pass a few notches.

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

Publication: GainesvilleTimes.com

Section/# of Pages: Sports/1 of 2

Date: 5/27/10

Falcons give back to the kids

By Jonathan Zopf

BUFORD — As 7-year-old Hunter Jones slid across the floor, 6-foot-3, 260-pound Joe Zelenka scooted right behind him.

Every time Hunter moved, so did Zelenka, the Atlanta Falcons' long snapper who was having a little fun with a new friend during Wednesday's Challenged Child and Friends bowling event at the Oasis Bowling Center.

"You could have me in here with 10 kids and we'll have some fun," Zelenka said. "I'd be tired and sweaty, but it'll be fun."

Along with several of his teammates and a handful of cheerleaders, Zelenka was on hand to help raise scholarship money for Challenged Child, a Gainesville-based early-intervention center that specializes in working with children with disabilities.

The Falcons have been partners with Challenged Child for more than 10 years, and according to fundraising coordinator Gail Schneider, that relationship is priceless.

"They're great partners and we're very fortunate to be able to work with the Atlanta Falcons," Schneider said. "It's amazing to see these great big guys with our little kids, and they're great with them."

Not a minute went by without some sort of interaction between a player, cheerleader and child. Photos were taken. Footballs were signed. Smiles were everywhere.

"It's awesome to see these kids get out and have fun and put a smile on their faces," said Garrett Reynolds, who participated in the annual event as a rookie last year. "We've all been looking forward to this."

Standing at 6-7 and weighing 310 pounds, sometimes getting the kids to smile is difficult for Reynolds.

"Just nonstop smiling," Reynolds said on how he combats possibly intimidating the children. "Sometimes it takes them a while to warm up, but eventually they do and we have a good time."

"I try not to scare them too much."

That's one of the reasons why the players get down to the children's level, interact with them as if they were their own, and do everything they can to make them feel comfortable.

"It's amazing that the Falcons would want to help out a program like Challenged Child," said Hunter's mom, Delana. "They're so spirited with these children and you really see their heart."

According to Zelenka, they're really just showing their true age.

"There's a big correlation between football players and kids," Zelenka said. "We get along because we're kids at heart."

"These guys that are here are a bunch of big kids," he added. "We like to play, we like to laugh, and when you get us around real little kids, we're going to have fun."

"We're going to laugh, we're going to giggle and somebody's going to wind up getting tickled at some point and it's normally me."

Being able to act like a kid again makes this type of event special for the players, who realize how big an impact they have on children.

"We might not be Matt Ryan or Tony Gonzalez, but to these kids we are the big stars," Zelenka said. "We have the jerseys on and we play for the Falcons, so that's really cool."

Cool to some kids, but not to others.

"He likes the cheerleaders," said Rhonda Strange in reference to her 4-year-old grandson Issac Hubbard, who has cerebral palsy and hydrocephalus.

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Strange knows the benefit of events like Wednesday's bowling outing because through the help of Challenged Child, Issac has reached an age that doctors only gave him a 10 percent chance of seeing.

"If it weren't for events like this, he wouldn't be here," Strange said.

While not as severe for Hunter, who has Down syndrome, his mother is also thankful for the support and activities that Challenged Child provides.

"Anything to help him have a better day is worth it," Jones said. "Just knowing that he can come out to these types of events and not have a total meltdown puts a smile on my face because we got to do something and we got to show him off and really get out there and promote awareness."

All with the help of an NFL franchise.

"These uniforms and being in the NFL gives you a great platform and allows you to do some things you may not have been able to do," Reynolds said. "These kids see the jerseys and you go up there and talk to them and they just brighten up."

And that's what these types of events are all about.

"We only get to play this game for a short while," Zelenka said. "The simple fact that someone would call up and say, 'hey, we need some celebrities,' — and they consider us celebrities — that's awesome for us.

"We're going to come out and support a great organization that helps out kids and just love on them for a little bit and bless them."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/28/10

OTAs: Tony Gonzalez plans a trip to Super Bowl by D. Orlando Ledbetter

FLOWERY BRANCH – Falcons tight end Tony Gonzalez has heard owner Arthur Blank's message, loud and clear.

Gonzalez knows that Blank was not talking about wedding rings, either.

"On paper right now, this is probably the best team that I've ever been on," Gonzalez said after Wednesday's OTA session. "It's exciting. It's good to know that we can go out there and accomplish some big things this year.

When I say that, I'm thinking Super Bowl."

Gonzalez isn't shy about talking about the team's high aspirations.

"Why would I think any other way?" Gonzalez said. "Why would I, especially at this point in my career and with the talent that we have on this team. We can go a far ways if we want to, if we work the right way."

Gonzalez hasn't played on a team that's won a playoff game, but he was on the 2003 Kansas City team that posted at 13-3 regular season record and had the AFC's No. 2 seed. They were upset by the Indianapolis Colts 38-31 in the divisional round of the playoffs.

Gonzalez believes the Falcons are on par with those Chiefs who featured record-breaking seasons by running back Priest Holmes, quarterback Trent Green and returner Dante Hall.

"I know that offensively, we are comparable to that 2003 team out there in Kansas City when we had a lot of Pro Bowlers on that side of the ball," Gonzalez said. "We have that same talent on the offensive side of the ball."

The Chiefs' leaky defense failed them against the Colts. Gonzalez believes the Falcons defense has the potential to be much stronger unit.

"On defense with the pick up of Dunta (Robinson) coming in, (John) Abraham, (Curtis) Lofton and we have a lot of guys going into their third year," Gonzalez said. "That third year is when it really clicks for you. There is really no excuse at that point."

There has been a lot of talk about players making a big jump in their third year.

"You've had a chance to go out there and play," Gonzalez said. "Now you are out there in that comfort zone. That's when you start to hit your stride as a player. We have a lot of those types of guys on defense right now."

Also, quarterback Matt Ryan is entering his third year.

"I think if he keeps playing the way he is right now and keep improving, I've always said with Matt, it's not 'if', it's 'when'," Gonzalez said. "It's just up to him and to have us around him to make sure that our learning curve is accelerated. . . mentally, it's a no brainer for him. . . I've got big plans for Matt this year. But it takes all of us coming together."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/28/10

Tony Gonzalez advocates all-natural supplements for all By D. Orlando Ledbetter

FLOWERY BRANCH -- After Tony Gonzalez gets his early-morning weight-lifting in, he heads to his office.

This offseason he's doing the publicity and marketing work on All-Pro Science, a line of all-natural nutritional supplements and products. The products are a follow-up to his book All-Pro Diet, which came out last offseason.

"It's going well," Gonzalez said. "It's pretty much my job now."

Gonzalez, a vegan, was looking for ways to add protein to his diet.

"The people are really liking that niche, that all-natural niche," Gonzalez said. "It's something that people are recognizing, that you have to put good stuff in your body because it affects what you get out of your body."

With Gonzalez being dedicated to doing things the all-natural way, he could only shake his head when he heard the explanations from Houston linebacker Brian Cushing after his four-game suspension was announced for violating the NFL's policy on performance-enhancing substances.

"You're heard it all before," Gonzalez said. "That's the only thing. The NFL does a good job of [publicizing] where you can send all of your stuff and see if it's correct."

Gonzalez said some guys violate the league policy when they take weight-loss supplements.

"[Some] are not trying to cheat or gain extra muscle," Gonzalez said. "It's unfortunate, but the NFL gives you ample opportunity to go out there and get it tested. There is really no excuse when it comes down to it."

For now, Gonzalez's products are available online, and he promotes them through his twitter.com account, TonyGonzalez88, which has more than 8,000 followers.

"The plan is to go into all of the stores like Whole Foods," Gonzalez said. "I'd like to be in Costco. I want to take it as far as it can go because it's something that's needed."

Gonzalez frowns upon the companies who put artificial flavors and synthetics in their supplements.

"That's stuff that you don't need," Gonzalez said. "You can do it the natural way, and I'm living proof of that."

He also admonishes NFL players for being unaware about what's in their supplements.

"You have to do it the natural way, otherwise you're going to get busted," Gonzalez said.

One misconception about the book is that the All-Pro Diet was for athletes trying to reach all-pro status. But Gonzalez said it's for the average person or the weekend warrior. He doesn't view it as much as a diet, but more of a lifestyle change.

"It's not something you do to lose five pounds or something like that or to get ready for muscle beach down in Miami or something," Gonzalez said. "This is something that you do for your life, not just for your weight, but for your life and longevity."

There are some interesting recipes in the book. Including the banana-coconut smoothie, cilantro-grilled salmon and lemon-honey mahi-mahi.

"I always mix it up, as far as my smoothies go," Gonzalez said. "This morning I put coconut water instead of rice milk."

He mixed it with the spinach, raspberries and a banana and blended it up.

"It's a great way to start the day," Gonzalez said. "You get all of your good vitamins with your fruits, vegetables and some good high-quality protein. That with a bowl of oatmeal is a great way to start the day."
He also recommends the white-bean chili recipe.

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/29/10

Robinson enjoying 'smooth' transition to Falcons

By Dan Parr

Atlanta recently wrapped up its second round of OTAs and CB Dunta Robinson, who signed with the Falcons on the opening weekend of free agency, said the transition to a new team has been smooth thus far. He admitted to PFW that he still is getting used to playing off the line of scrimmage after playing at the line in Houston.

"I come from a man-press defense where we're always up in the receiver's face," he said. "Here it's a little more off (the line of scrimmage). There's a little bit more backpedaling. Those are the different things. Sometimes my backpedal, since I'm so used to shuffling, will turn into a shuffle instead of staying in my backpedal, but every day I'm coming out and working on that and I'm feeling a lot better."

After six seasons with the Texans, Robinson became one of the league's highest-paid cornerbacks when the Falcons signed him to a six-year contract that reportedly included \$25.5 million guaranteed.

It's no surprise that expectations are high for Robinson. Secondary coach Tim Lewis didn't have a bad word to say about Robinson when asked about his star pupil.

"He's very coachable," Lewis told PFW. "... His natural defensive back ability is fantastic. We're thrilled and fortunate to have him. The leadership that he brings is fantastic."

Robinson is the No. 1 corner Atlanta has badly needed, and the media began inquiring as to whether he would shadow the opposition's No. 1 receiver at his introductory press conference. After getting a few months to observe his fellow corners, Robinson said he doesn't expect that to be one of his tasks.

"I think we have good enough corners to the point where we don't need that," he said. "We can lock the right side and the left side down and that makes it a lot of fun. If it calls for it, I'll definitely go shadow whoever they want me to shadow. Right now I'm just trying to be a team player and buy into this system and learn the way they do things around here."

The Falcons are expected to hold a competition in training camp for the starting job at right cornerback, but Robinson said one contender has caught his eye already.

"Actually, Brent Grimes has been very impressive," Robinson said. "He's doing a great job. He's making a lot of plays."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/29/10

NFL uses in-house intern program to help players prep for careers after football

By Teresa M. Walker

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) - Titans safety Donnie Nickey no longer thinks of the staff at the NFL headquarters as commissioner Roger Goodell's "goons."

Nickey is among a handful of players getting an eye-opening experience through the league's in-house internship program, which allows them to work in various departments with the people out of the public eye.

New York Jets linebacker Calvin Pace is amazed by the many details handled by the league's game operations department. Atlanta Falcons receiver Harry Douglas quizzed every person he could on how they reached their positions.

The players experience everything from public relations down to the smallest details of how the league runs games.

"The only thing we get from the NFL is the rules and the fines ... so as a player you get this opinion and this perception of the league as an ivory tower, a big castle in New York," Nickey said.

Preparing for his eighth season, Nickey, who graduated from Ohio State in 2003 with a degree in risk management and investment strategy, found NFL headquarters to be straight business during the week he spent on Park Avenue earlier this offseason.

"They don't know anything about Cover 2 defense, but they can break down the revenue for their licensed products. They're really efficient. It's a lot of really good people that work so that it changed my opinion from like commissioner Goodell and his 'goons,'" Nickey said.

Yes, Nickey even spent some quality time with the commissioner.

"He just really loves it," Nickey said. "It's all about the game, and they don't lose sight that we're the product that they package."

Pace has been most impressed by how NFL employees are responsible for everything from painting the fields to game balls and team travel and how closely officials are studied and graded. That scrutiny on the officials and knowing the high standard to which they are held comforted Pace.

"We play. You win, you lose. But the people behind the scenes really keeping it the best sport in the world? It's crazy," Pace said.

The NFL's internship program is part of the league's player development programs, which have sent players to study business at Stanford, Harvard and Wharton, among others. There is also a broadcast boot camp at NFL Films to prep players for media jobs.

A new four-day program starts at Georgia Tech in two weeks, designed to help players learn how to handle the transition from the NFL and to figure out what comes next. Christopher Henry, the NFL's director of player development, said it's really challenging psychologically for players switching to that next career.

"When you think about the level of dedication, of focus that has been required to play this game at the highest levels and then all of a sudden to have that disappear one day, there's an incredible piece about loss and grief. And we want to ensure that we fill that void and we provide them with an opportunity to continue to be successful," Henry said.

Former player Troy Vincent is the new vice president of player development, and another former player, Lance Legree, manages the department.

The players put in eight-hour days and pay for their own airfare, hotels and nearly every meal. Henry said the busy offseason has proven to be a challenge for players, and Nickey said he missed a whole week of the Titans' offseason program to take part.

But the players agree the experience was well worth the expense.

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 5/29/10

Former players Omare Lowe and Michael Boulware also have interned this offseason. Oakland defensive end Chris Cooper is due in June 21-25. Douglas, whose 2009 season ended with a knee injury last August, graduated from Louisville with a degree in political science in 2007 and wants to be a lawyer. He found many lawyers in the NFL offices during his week there.

He's also recommending the program to teammates.

"Life after football is very big. At some point, football does end. You don't do it for your whole life," Douglas said Thursday. "I know the average years in the NFL isn't long or in any professional sport. It's good to do a lot of things outside of football."

Pace has a luxury available only to the Jets or Giants, thanks to their close proximity to the league offices. He spends as many off days there as possible during the Jets' organized team activities or minicamps. Going into his eighth NFL season, the former sociology student at Wake Forest isn't sure yet what he will do once his playing days end.

"I do know football's my passion. It's what I love to do," Pace said. "I don't know if I necessarily want to be a coach or someone in the front office. I feel like coming here and seeing what they do might give me a chance to still be close to the game when my playing days are over."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 8.1.10

Abraham went to Florida to work on his pass rush

By D. Orlando Ledbetter

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

FLOWERY BRANCH -- Falcons defensive end John Abraham did not spend much time with the team in the offseason.

However, coach Mike Smith did not have a problem with him staying away and going through an individualized offseason program.

Abraham, the team's top pass-rushing threat, dropped by for parts of minicamp and made a cameo appearance at the organized team activities.

Abraham's sack total decreased from 16.5 to 5.5 last season. It was the first time that Abraham played in all 16 games in a season and didn't reach double-digits in sacks.

With such a dramatic drop, some thought he should have been around the Falcons' complex more often.

"I spoke with John on a couple of occasions this summer," Smith said. "He's in great shape and ready to go. I think he's anxious for the season to get here like all of us."

Smith supported Abraham's decision to stay away.

"Those workouts that we have are not mandatory," Smith said. "I've been very pleased with the way that John has worked since we've been here. Prior to us getting here, there was always talk about him not staying healthy. We've had no issues in the two years. That's 32 consecutive starts."

Abraham spent the two months before training camp working out at Bommarito Performance Systems in south Florida.

"I did more training this year," Abraham said. "I wanted to work out with some other high-caliber players."

Several NFL players, including Cincinnati's Chad Ochocinco, Buffalo's Marcus Stroud, Chicago's Thomas Jones and Tommie Harris, Dallas' Julius Jones and Carolina's Everette Brown trained with Pete Bommarito this summer.

Abraham also took defensive end Lawrence Sidbury and offensive lineman Quinn Ojinnaka to train with Bommarito, who attempted to diagnose Abraham's physical deficiencies. Then they used specifically designed power and strength endurance workouts.

"We also had him do a lot of base athletic motions like pass rush," Bommarito said.

They took another interesting approach to training Abraham.

"The name of the game with linemen is that we train them like wrestlers," Bommarito said. "They do so much grappling and so much hand work, with contact and leverage at the point of attack, that you can train those guys. I think he caught on very well to it."

After last season's film review, the Falcons concluded that Abraham was just fine physically despite the dramatic drop in his sack total.

He was effectively targeted more by opponents because the middle push on the defense was not as good as it was in 2008, when he was named second-team All-Pro.

Abraham, who turned 32 in May, did some soul-searching, too.

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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"I don't think I've lost anything," Abraham said. "I've watched myself on tape. I looked at my moves, and they are still good. The pass rush is still there. I just want to get there sooner."

Abraham is the elder on the defensive line, and he plans to embrace the role.

"I've been doing a lot of stuff for myself," Abraham said. "This year I'm going to try to help them out more, so we can all work as a unit and get to the quarterback."

Also, the defense was targeted for major improvements.

In addition to signing cornerback Dunta Robinson in free agency, the Falcons drafted linebacker Sean Weatherspoon in the first round and defensive tackle Corey Peters in the third. Also, defensive tackle Peria Jerry, the team's No. 1 pick in 2009, and safety William Moore, the second-round pick in 2009, return from injuries.

Abraham is fine with the high expectations for the unit.

"I feel it every year. The older you get, the greater the expectations," Abraham said. "The younger players just want to get in here and learn everything because they feel like they can play forever. Me, going into my 11th year, the expectations are a lot greater."

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 8.5.10

Falcons' Weatherspoon showing he's not empty noise
3:08 pm August 5, 2010, by Jeff Schultz

FLOWERY BRANCH — For most people, talking interrupts the silence. For Sean Weatherspoon, it's the other way around. It's widely believed he spent about seven minutes as a baby in the goo-goo, gah-gah period of communication, and then advanced directly to a full-blown monologue.

"If I played offense, I'd be writing down his license plate," said linebacker Mike Peterson. "And then when I got a chance, I'd look him up — and shut him up."

And he actually likes Weatherspoon.

How much does Weatherspoon talk? So much that in the weeks leading up to the NFL draft, some teams decided to ignore the game tape from Missouri because they believed he wasn't worth the trouble. Or the punctured ear drums.

An unnamed executive from one team was quoted in Pro Football Weekly as saying: "He never shuts up. He gives me a headache. I don't want him in my locker room."

To all of the detractors, the Falcons say: Thank you.

They believe they will be better on defense because of Weatherspoon. He gives them what they need: An outside linebacker with speed, ability and exuberance. If daily loud annoyances are unfortunate byproducts of that, so be it.

"I notice when people get angry at me," Weatherspoon said, smiling, like this was a badge of honor. "Sometimes they want to come after me."

Was he always this way?

"Oh yes, even when I was young," he said. "If you would listen, I would talk."

"I always got into in trouble in school. My progress report would say, 'Talks excessively.'"

General manager Thomas Dimitroff comes from New England, where players are disciplined, bordering on robotic.

"We were hypersensitive to bulletin board material," he said.

He drafted Weatherspoon anyway. When he witnessed him up close at Senior Bowl practices, others were scared off but he was intrigued.

"Some people in the league were taken back by the loquaciousness," he said. "It spurred a lot of discussion, whether he was going to be disruptive, because he was so over the top. In my mind it was worth [researching], whether it was contrived or it was truly his personality. We came to the conclusion it was never a negative-driven enthusiasm."

If Weatherspoon was perceived as merely a megaphone with ears, Dimitroff wouldn't have taken him the 19th pick. But he impressed the team in several interviews, and in "white board" sessions with coaches.

"When he's in the room, he has a presence," Dimitroff said.

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Date: 8.5.10

No kidding. On the first day of full-pad practices, Weatherspoon nearly took off running back Antone Smith's head – problem being, he didn't realize it wasn't intended as a full-speed drill. ("I just got caught up in the moment," he said.)

The next day, Weatherspoon (6-2, 245) scuffled with tackle Sam Baker (6-5, 307).

It's what you would expect from somebody who has studied highlights from the likes of Ray Lewis, Lawrence Taylor, Dick Butkus, Jack Ham and Ray Nitschke.

"You definitely want people to know that you're here," he said. "My goal is to come in and make plays. I want to show that I belong."

He also understands he's a rookie. After practices, he carries Peterson's shoulder pads and helmet. He brings drinks and snacks to veterans. He sings on demand.

"The linebackers made me do it," he said. "Ruben Studdard, 'Fly Without Wings.'"

Dimitroff told his scouts not to think, "We can change him." He wanted to know if the real Weatherspoon would fit in. Fortunately, the player didn't try to low key it at the Senior Bowl.

"Everybody was so quiet during the stretch," he said. "It's like, 'This is not me. This is not normal.' So I just started yakking it up. Next thing you know, everybody was into it. Just because we were in front of all GMs and scouts doesn't mean you can't have some fun."

Final story: Falcons officials were meeting with one last player before the draft at UCLA. Dimitroff sat in the back of the room, listening to coaches talk to the prospect.

"My mind was wandering," he recalled.

At that moment, he took personnel director Les Snead's small whiteboard and wrote down one of his mantras: "Positive. Passionate. Perserverance." He added a "12" (Weatherspoon's uniform number) after each word.

"I started thinking, 'Why are we wasting our time to see if he's going to fit in?'" he said.
The new mantra in Flowery Branch: Embrace the noise

ATLANTA FALCONS NEWS CLIPS

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Date: 8.5.10

Talented Falcons could lurk as surprise team of 2010

2:35 am August, 5 2010, by Jim Corbett

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. — There are no HBO Hard Knocks cameras or Albert Haynesworth sideshows here at owner Arthur Blank's lush, Atlanta Falcons nest carved into the sleepy, rolling woodlands 40 miles north of downtown Atlanta.

Instead of Hard Knocks, it's about coach Mike Smith's hard-work, team-first ethos that has fostered a confident vibe pulsing through this talented, under-the-radar team.

"Rise Up" is the marketing department's slogan for the 2010 Falcons. Coming off the first back-to-back winning seasons in Falcons history was nice, but it is nowhere close to the expectations Smith, general manager Thomas Dimitroff and a talented group of Falcons have set for themselves.

Dimitroff and Smith have assembled a hungry core of youthful veterans entering their prime supplemented by veteran mentors, such as 10-time Pro Bowl tight end Tony Gonzalez, former Pro Bowl defensive end John Abraham, linebacker Mike Peterson and center Todd McClure.

The young core includes third-year quarterback Matt Ryan, the 2008 Offensive Rookie of the Year; re-dedicated running back Michael Turner trying to return to 1,699-yard, 2008 form; Pro Bowl wide receiver Roddy White; left tackle Sam Baker; defensive tackle Peria Jerry; middle linebacker Curtis Lofton and safety Thomas DeCoud. All except Turner and White, seventh and sixth-year veterans, respectively, are entering their third or second NFL season. The signing of former Houston Texans cornerback Dunta Robinson was another big-time addition that has the Falcons primed.

"We're ready to make a Super Bowl run," says Gonzalez, the 14th-year veteran whose next catch will be the 1,000th of his 10-time Pro Bowl career. "We're not a young team anymore. These guys need to understand that they're hitting their peak as players.

"Guys came in great shape and we're not having any distractions. You don't see guys here who can't pass a conditioning test. The window is so short in this game, that's where consistency and hard work come in. Our coach won't let us do it any other way."

What's been even more encouraging is the rise of a 21st-ranked defense that struggled badly last year against the pass. With Jerry lost to a season-ending Week 2 knee injury and Abraham double-teamed into 5½-sack inefficiency, opposing quarterbacks torched the Falcons secondary for 54 pass plays of more than 20 yards.

Hence the move to sign Robinson, the former Houston Texans shut-down cornerback, and draft former Missouri linebacker Sean Weatherspoon, who is working at both strong and weak side and has the speed to run with a tight end down the seam or cover a slot receiver or running back underneath.

"We're perceived as a young football team, but our young players have a lot of games under their belts," Smith says in his spacious second-floor office overlooking the team's state-of-the-art training complex. "That bodes well for our team.

"We've tried to stay on task and build the team through the draft. And we have a group of mentors and a bunch of young guys who will become mentors very quickly because of their experience."

A former defensive coordinator with the Jacksonville Jaguars and an assistant on the Baltimore Ravens team that won a Super Bowl in 2000, Smith is at heart a no-nonsense, defensive coach who understands what it takes to defend the spacing geometry of today's multi-faceted, spread attacks.

Attack featuring sure-handed Pro Bowler White, receivers Michael Jenkins and Harry Douglas and a prolific receiver in a tight end's body in Gonzalez, who looks as good as ever at 34.

They have the tackle-breaking, home-run hitting back in the 5-10, 244-pound Turner, who has the low center of gravity and burst to take any carry the distance.

What needs to improve is a 26th-ranked sack attack that allowed quarterbacks to shred the Falcons and forced Smith and defensive coordinator Brian Van Gorder to dial up too many blitzes.

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The Falcons have the balance to pound the football down a defense's throat or spread them out with a no-huddle.

"Even though our sack numbers were dead average, we didn't affect the quarterback like we needed to," Smith says. "In this league, when you give the quarterback time to go through his progressions, he's going to make you pay."

Ryan is healthy after missing almost two full games last season with a painful turf toe injury and his statistics suffered. He threw for 22 touchdowns with 14 interceptions, three more than his rookie season, and his completion percentage fell to 58.3% from 61.1% his freshman season.

Ryan spent the offseason studying the strengths of the top five quarterbacks — four-time league MVP Peyton Manning, three-time Super Bowl winner Tom Brady, Super Bowl XLIV MVP Drew Brees, Philip Rivers and Aaron Rodgers, who led the league in third-down passing.

The ultra-competitive and hard-working Ryan is the high-profile face of the Dimitroff-Smith program who wants to see a team that battled the reigning Super Bowl champion New Orleans Saints tough twice last season get over the hump and go beyond just returning to the playoffs.

"Having the back-to-back winning seasons was great for the organization and it was great to get that monkey off the back," Ryan says. "But with that, more is expected within the locker room. We feel like we have the talent to do it."

"We feel like we're working the right way to get to where we want to be. We're excited to finally get to the games where we have a chance to showcase that."

Dimitroff, the former Patriots director of college scouting, sees a lot of Brady in Ryan's demeanor, especially after Ryan let receiver Mike Jenkins know he wasn't pleased with the way a route was run following an incompletion.

That accountability and premium on consistency is just the way the highly-respected Smith wants it.

"It's about being more consistent in everything we do from play to play, from practice to practice from game to game. Everyone has ability in this league. The great teams and organizations are the ones who have sustainability."

AROUND FALCONS TRAINING CAMP

The scene: A crowd of 3,500 fans packed the grassy bluff overlooking the practice fields for the first two practices of camp and a steady stream of fans have shown up each day despite steamy heat. There's a line of seven corporate tents atop the bluff. The Falcons planned several special events for camp: a Friday night lights Aug. 6 intra-squad scrimmage at nearby North Gwinnett High School; a joint practice with the Jacksonville Jaguars on Aug. 9 and 10 and a joint practice with the New England Patriots Aug. 17 before an Aug. 19 preseason meeting.

Reasons to believe: Ryan's best is likely yet to come entering his most productive offseason. And a re-dedicated Turner dropped 15 pounds in a bid to rediscover the punishing running style that produced 1,699 yards and 17 touchdowns in his 2008 Pro Bowl season. Slot receiver Harry Douglas practiced for the first time Wednesday since undergoing season-ending ACL surgery following a knee injury suffered in last summer's training camp. And the offensive line has been together for three years.

Trouble spot: The Falcons had 28 sacks last season, third-fewest in the NFC. The hope is the return of second-year defensive tackle Peria Jerry from season-ending knee surgery will free up Abraham to return to his 16½-sack form of 2008. Backup end Kroy Biermann, who had five sacks last season, is also being counted on to help with the sack slack.

Who's new: The addition of Robinson injects a play-making cover corner who should have an effect on the pass rush. Robinson will have a chance to play more in zone coverage, theoretically giving him more chances to find the ball and intercept it. Weatherspoon has been the talk of camp, impressing the likes of Gonzalez and Ryan with his sticky coverage, his ball skills and his beyond-his-years confidence.

Positional battles: The biggest camp battle is at the other starting cornerback spot where Brent Grimes is running first team ahead of Chris Owens, but figures to get bumped back to nickel corner once veteran Brian Williams comes back from knee surgery. The kicking job is veteran Matt Bryant's to lose with former Baltimore Ravens castoff Steven Hauschka providing camp competition.

On the mend: Backup running back Jerious Norwood has been sidelined by a hip flexor.

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Jamaal Anderson meets kids from Ala. School for the Deaf

10:49 pm August 8, 2010, by D. Orlando Ledbetter

FLOWERY BRANCH – Defensive end **Jamaal Anderson** had a wide grin on his face after practice on Saturday.

He'd just finished talking to about 30 football players from the Alabama School for the Deaf, who had made the ride over from Talladega.

Anderson's father, Glenn, is deaf.

"I was signing to the kids individually, but when I spoke to the whole group I had an interpreter to relay my message," Anderson said. "I was just telling them that I appreciate them coming out here. I know they didn't have to come here."

Anderson grew up signing and has talked about how his father didn't use his impairment as an excuse and how he earned a doctorate degree.

"I told them that I was proud to represent the deaf community out here because I feel like nobody in the NFL is doing it," Anderson said. "It's a strong feeling in my heart to have something to represent. I told them to stay focused and have a great season, stay injury free and keep you hopes alive because anything can come true."

Anderson said some of the players wanted a piece of him.

"Some of the offensive linemen wanted to try to rough me up," Anderson said. "I told that I was sore from (the scrimmage)."

He said they knew their football.

"They wanted to see Matt Ryan, John Parker Wilson and Roddy White," Anderson said. "They know their football. They just wanted to be regular and see guys out here playing football."

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Date: 8.5.10

Falcons Cornerback Brent Grimes Stakes Out His Position

1:41 pm August 5, 2010, by Ray Glier

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. -- So go look for it on YouTube or somewhere on the web. Play it back, again and again, and watch the Atlanta Falcons' Brent Grimes, all 5-foot-9 of him, leap and stretch and steal a Drew Brees pass.

The ball was going over his head and this runt of an NFL defensive back (is he really 5-9? maybe) just bursts off the turf and intercepts a pass from a quarterback who knows how to get balls over defensive backs.

Grimes stands in front of you, as all the other behemoths who play for Falcons walk off the field, and you just have to say to him, "Explain yourself."

Grimes, the left cornerback, says, "What do you mean explain myself?" Then he smiles, and gets it. The height, the leaping ability. Coming from Shippensburg.

Yeah, that. What are you doing out here? It wasn't meant to be disrespectful. It was meant as admiration.

"You should have seen me in high school, smaller than this, 5-6, 5-7, maybe 145 pounds," Grimes said. "I was a running back."

Grimes' father was an athlete, a baseball player. His father has kin who participated in the Olympics. There are some genetics involved here, but he still went to tiny Shippensburg State and no one was going to give him a break coming out of that place.

So Grimes gets a shot as a free agent in 2006 and he keeps hanging and hanging. He can jump, but he also pays attention on the practice field when orders are given.

"He's an acrobat," said John Parker Wilson, one of the backup quarterbacks. "He recovers so fast, that's what he does."

Roddy White, the Falcons receiver who is three or four inches taller, went to the goal line and turned out and jumped for a high pass that was meant to go over Grimes' head. Grimes was in White's grill -- easily -- and batted the ball away.

You have to pay attention to Grimes because he is a starting left cornerback for a defense that was lit up for explosive plays last season. The Falcons third down efficiency on defense was 45.3 percent, the worst in the NFC.

Grimes led the Falcons with six interceptions last season and played better than a lot of his teammates down the stretch of the season. Still, this team was haunted throughout the season by big plays.

That's why the Falcons' big deal in the offseason was to sign cornerback Dunta Robinson.

Meanwhile, the Falcons drafted Dominique Franks, a big physical corner out of Oklahoma, in the fifth round last spring. In 2009 they grabbed Chris Owens, another corner in the third round.

Those are the guys who are supposed to be in there before Grimes of Shippensburg.

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Vastly improved Ryan has Falcons poised to catapult Saints

By Pat Kirwan

NFL.com

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. -- For the first time in franchise history, the Atlanta Falcons have put back-to-back winning seasons together, and they appear far from satisfied.

And there's a quiet confidence building in Falcons training camp, a confidence I believe is warranted.

I think they're going to give the Saints all they can handle this season in the NFC South. The Falcons right now are poised to win that division, and they're talking like that very quietly, very humbly. But they can start to shout it because they're loaded, and the players returning are getting noticeably better, especially at the most important position: quarterback.

» Falcons: Vastly improved Ryan has team confident

Matt Ryan has looked terrific in camp. He reminds me of Tom Brady when Brady came into the league. The Patriots QB was skinny and slow, just like Ryan was in his first two seasons in Atlanta. But Ryan's been locked in that weight room for the last six months, and it shows.

He's bigger, he's stronger, he's faster. He looked good on the bootleg when I saw him practice against the Jaguars on Tuesday. His deep ball is significantly better. He threw a 60-yard pass that Roddy White was unable to close on, demonstrating his new arm strength

Ryan told me that he has a lot of leeway running the Falcons' offense. "I can help move plays in and out of the lineup," he said. I think he and the Falcons are poised for a big season.

OBSERVATION DECK

» The offense, despite a rash of injuries last year, still ranked 16th. One of the Falcons' major points of emphasis this summer has been their first-down package. They were a top-10 third-down offense, but coach Mike Smith and Ryan both say the team needs to do a better job on the early downs.

» The Falcons have a plan if wide receiver Michael Jenkins -- the team's No. 3 passing option behind White and tight end Tony Gonzalez -- isn't available for the season opener at Pittsburgh. Brian Finneran is the answer for the No. 3 spot in Jenkins' absence, but the checkdown game to the backs is going to be featured more this year.

» Atlanta's pass defense was ranked 28th last year, but the Falcons have improved in this area on three levels. They will be better up front rushing the passer with the return of DT Peria Jerry, who missed most of his rookie season with a knee injury; the addition of rookie linebacker Sean Weatherspoon; and the offseason acquisition of cornerback Dunta Robinson.

» There's a big battle brewing at the corner opposite Robinson. Brian Williams isn't healthy enough yet to compete, but Brent Grimes and Chris Owens are going at it with no clearcut leader. The Falcons, who were in nickel and dime defenses 58 percent of the time last year, should be in those pass-defense situations with less frequency this season.

SURPRISE, SURPRISE

Don't be surprised if ...

» ... Running back Michael Turner, who has never caught more than six passes in any of his six NFL seasons, is more involved in the passing game. He has made a big effort to improve as a receiver.

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'This is Matt Ryan's team': Falcons following QB's path

By Jim Corbett

USA Today

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. — There are two sides to Atlanta Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan. There's the pressure-proof "Matty Ice," whose on-field cool elevates teammates. Then there is an increasingly fiery leader who stood steaming after a training camp miscue when wideout Michael Jenkins failed to run the proper route.

Ryan let Jenkins know it, correcting the mistake on the spot.

All third-year general manager Thomas Dimitroff could think to himself was: seen that before.

The former New England Patriots director of college scouting was reminded of a young Tom Brady coming of age as a Super Bowl-winning quarterback and leader.

"I saw Matt during practice standing there seething at Michael Jenkins," Dimitroff says. "Matt talked about it with Michael as they came off the field. Tom was like that in New England. Tom's a fiery leader who demanded accountability. The same thing with Matt.

"It was a cool thing to see."

Then there's this praise from Falcons tight end Tony Gonzalez, a 10-time Pro Bowler:

"This is Matt Ryan's team, and it's going to be his team for a long, long time to come," Gonzalez says. "He's the hardest-working guy on our team. And he's coming into his own about saying and doing what's best for this team.

"His best is coming. I see it every day."

That bodes well for the up-and-coming Falcons in Year 3 of the Ryan-Dimitroff-head coach Mike Smith era.

At the heart of a Super Bowl contender is the fire-and-ice backfield of running back Michael Turner and Matty Ice, the 2008 offensive rookie of the year who suffered a statistical falloff trying to play through turf toe last season.

Smith says of Turner, "Michael is on a mission to bounce back from a subpar year."

Turner shed 15 pounds and says he's in the best shape of his seven-year career as he bids to recapture his 1,699-yard, 17-touchdown 2008 Pro Bowl form. He got too heavy, then tried to come back too soon from a high ankle sprain.

"The Burner is still here," Turner says. "I'm not a one-year wonder."

Ryan spent his offseason studying video highlights of last season's five best quarterbacks — Brady; league MVP Peyton Manning of the Indianapolis Colts; Super Bowl XLIV MVP Drew Brees of the New Orleans Saints for his check-down efficiency; Philip Rivers of the San Diego Chargers for his deep passing; and Aaron Rodgers of the Green Bay Packers who led the NFL in third-down passing.

Smith was impressed that Ryan did that self-improvement project the way a coach would. Ryan incorporated the traits that best suited him, expanding his football tool belt.

"Each guy is a little bit different, and each offense is a little bit different," Ryan says. "I was impressed with their consistency, first and second down, third down, red zone, just consistently making good plays.

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"If they make a mistake, they get the ball down and out of their hands.

"My first season was all about learning the offense. This offseason, I thought was a great opportunity to say, 'Let's look at some different guys, how we're going to apply it to our offense.' "

The plan is to deploy Turner more in the check-down passing game.

"Michael is huge for me," Ryan says. "Having a running back like him and an offensive line like we do, he has the size to run between the tackles and pick up first downs or the speed to take one 75-80 yards.

"He creates great play-action opportunities for me."

Turner was in San Diego with Brees and Rivers.

"The common denominator with Drew, Philip and Matt is how they study, what they bring to the meeting room and how they elevate guys," Turner says. "I don't believe anyone's seen my best yet. Same for Matt.

"We have our sights set on the Super Bowl."

Smith sees a fast-improving, bring-the-wood defense out to dramatically improve its No. 21 ranking.

"There's no doubt we're going to be a good team," Gonzalez says. "It's just a matter of whether we can be a great football team and go to the Super Bowl.

"That's the goal."