

# Sports

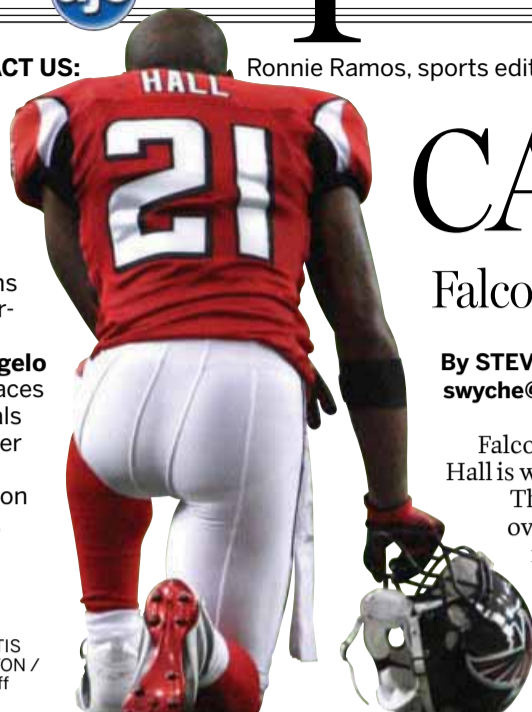


Calvin Johnson (right) scored a tie-breaking touchdown as Georgia Tech rallied past Miami 30-23. Georgia also rallied but couldn't beat Florida, losing 21-14.

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL, Section F**



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Falcons cornerback DeAngelo Hall faces Bengals receiver Chad Johnson today.

CURTIS COMPTON / Staff

## CAN'T FACE FAILING

Falcons cornerback hates losing at anything — even wars of words

By STEVE WYCHE  
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Falcons cornerback DeAngelo Hall is wound very tight right now. The past few days, he's stewed over the secondary's performance in a 41-38 victory over Pittsburgh last Sunday. He looked bad at times, like when he, the NFL's supposed Fastest

Man, got outrun by allegedly slow-footed and one-shoed Hines Ward on a 70-yard touchdown catch.

Hall's also not happy about being asked by team officials to not engage in a war of words with Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Chad Johnson, who verbally roundhoused Hall — "DeAngelo Fall" — leading up to Sunday's game.

Imagine Muhammad Ali being muzzled after a poor fight, then having Joe Frazier telling him how bad he's going

to whip him.

Hall can't wait for the bell to ring. "It is about to go down," Hall said. "I'm a big believer in the saying 'Show me.' You don't know how much stuff we blew in the Pittsburgh game, and you know me, I don't like to look bad. I have been working all week. It's going to be a battle. I mean a battle."

"Once you show me or I show you, ▶ Please see HALL, D9



**FALCONS AT BENGALS**

1 p.m. today  
Fox, 92.9 FM

▶ **Game day:** Five keys to victory, starting lineups. **D9**

▶ **Cleared:** Davis won't be fined for hit on Big Ben. **D9**

**NFL WEEK 8**

▶ **Inside the NFL:** Tests for performance-enhancing substances get results. **D8**

▶ Preview capsules, injury reports. **D8**

## At last, a day in the sun

Low-key Nelson joins golf's elite in Hall of Fame

By STAN AWTRY  
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For 59 years, Larry Nelson has been paying his dues. Now, after years of waiting, he's finally getting his due.

Nelson, he of slight frame and balding head, will be inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in St. Augustine, Fla., Monday. Never a self-promoter, Nelson's achievements — highlighted by three major championships — can stand on their own when he joins golf's elite.

It's just another instance of Nelson, from Marietta, surprising people by doing things deemed beyond his capabilities.

He was an outstanding baseball player, the best 140-pound right-handed pitcher you could expect. His best pitch was a wicked curveball that could be delivered from three angles.

He was a good youth soccer coach, although he knew nothing about the sport. He coached only so 5-year-old son Drew and other local children wouldn't get shut out of the league.

These days he's on the board of two banks that he partially owns, even though he possesses no experience in the area of finance.

▶ Please see NELSON, D3

▶ **CHRYSLER TIGHT:** K.J. Choi leads three golfers by a shot. **D15**

**RED AUERBACH: 1917-2006**

## Celtics great won 9 titles



ELISE AMENDOLA / Associated Press

Former Boston Celtics coach Red Auerbach died Saturday at 89. His teams blew away rivals, winning eight straight titles and nine overall. **D14**

**ath•lete (ath-leet) n.:** a person who is trained or skilled in exercises, sports, or games requiring physical strength, agility, or stamina



DAVID TULIS / Staff

Tony Stewart (lapping Atlanta Motor Speedway with an AJC photographer) laughs at claims that drivers aren't athletes.

# Automatically athletes?

NASCAR drivers answer the claim that racing requires no athleticism

Story by RICK MINTER / rminter@ajc.com

First of all, NASCAR drivers are tired of hearing it. Tired, tired, tired. Every year, it seems, somebody from a sports talk show or a print publication comes around to take shot. NASCAR drivers should not be considered as athletes, they say, and should not be confused with competitors in other "elite" sports.

All those drivers do is sit in a car and turn left, the critics say. And look at the bodies on some of those guys. Even Tony Stewart said last year at Daytona that he was too old and too fat to climb fences.

Yeah, well, Stewart, who has slimmed down as a result of an intense workout program, says that all those who think NASCAR drivers aren't athletes should chew on this side of the debate:

"If you want to know what being a race car driver is like in the middle of July," said Stewart, one of auto racing's greatest drivers, "just get in your car, roll your windows up, turn off your stereo and turn the heat

**BASS PRO SHOPS 500**

- ▶ **When:** 2:55 p.m. today
- ▶ **Where:** Atlanta Motor Speedway
- ▶ **TV; radio:** NBC; 106.7 FM

up full blast ... and ride around the Atlanta loop with snowmobile suit and a helmet on for four-and-a-half hours.

"I always laugh when I hear they don't think we're athletes." Al Shuford believes he is as qualified as anyone to weigh in on the debate. Shuford, a former assistant trainer for the Carolina Panthers, is

▶ Please see NASCAR, D11

**WHO ARE THESE GUYS?**

These drivers were athletes in high school long before NASCAR came along. Can you name them?

This driving legend lettered in baseball, basketball, football and golf in high school. He has won the Daytona 500 three times and won the 1999 Winston Cup title.



This driver played football, basketball, baseball and golf in high school. In racing, he has eight career Cup wins and helps manage his race team.

This driver lettered in five sports (baseball, basketball, cross country, football, and golf) in high school. In racing, he finished ninth in points in 2004.



**ANSWERS INSIDE:** Learn the identities of these and other multisport drivers. **D10-11**

**THRASHERS 5, SABRES 4 (SO)**

## Record denied; perfect no more

Thrashers put end to Sabres' streak

By JOHN MANASSO  
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Buffalo, N.Y. — Any doubts about whether the Thrashers are for real should have come to an end Saturday. Their commanding performance in a 5-4 shootout win at sold-out HSBC Arena handed Buffalo its first loss in 11 games — cutting the Sabres one short of the record for consecutive wins to start the season.

Entering the game, the Thrashers talked about using the matchup between the top two teams in the Eastern Conference as a test, and if that was the case, they passed with flying colors. Sports Illustrated and The Hockey News were at the game, and HDNet changed its schedule to broadcast the game. Tickets on eBay, the Buffalo News reported in a front-page story, were going for \$435 a pair.

But Slava Kozlov, who spent one unhappy season here before being traded to Atlanta, scored on the first shot of the shootout. Then Kari Lehtonen slammed the door, stopping all three Buffalo shots, including the final one by Thomas Vanek with a piece of his glove as the puck ricocheted off the crossbar and high over the net to put an exclamation point on the victory.

"The most important thing is we got two points," Kozlov said, referring to consecutive

▶ Please see THRASHERS, D6

▶ **NO REGRETS:** Hartley defends shootout strategy. **D6**

**TAKING THE LEAD**

The Sabres have rarely trailed this season. In six games prior to playing the Thrashers, they had trailed a total of 13:45.

Opponent	Trailed	Result
Hurricanes	2:51	W, 3-2*
Canadiens	52:45	W, 5-4*
Senators	0:00	W, 4-3
Red Wings	36:19	W 3-2*
Rangers	6:03	W, 7-4
Flyers	0:00	W, 9-1
Hurricanes	7:42	W, 5-4
Bruins	0:00	W, 6-2
Canadiens	0:00	W, 4-1
Islanders	0:00	W, 3-0
<b>Thrashers</b>	<b>48:53</b>	<b>L, 5-4*</b>

\*shootout

**NEXT FOR THRASHERS**

- ▶ **Who:** at Maple Leafs
- ▶ **When:** 7:30 p.m. Monday
- ▶ **TV; radio:** SportSouth; 680 AM